

## The Stone Prince

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## The Stone Prince

by [Cynthialost](#)

### Summary

It all started with a myth – an old-wives’ tale circling through a small town called ‘Raymore’.

“There’s a statue.”, the townsfolk would say. “Deep into the woods by the lake.”

~~~or~~~

Dream is a Prince, fated to remain as a statue until 'true love' breaks his curse.

George is the son of the town's chief, tormented by his mother into doing heaps and heaps of chores, solely as a punishment for having a dream that was just too selfish.

The dream?

- simply wanting to have an adventure outside the little town he calls home.

Would George find that adventure, when he sneaks out of town one day, falling into a clearing where a mysterious statue resides?

Well...

'Tis the story of the Stone Prince,  
Will you stay for the telling of it?

## Notes

This work is purely fictional. If the people in this story ever state that they're uncomfortable with shipping or having stories written about them in general, I will take this work down. To my knowledge, anyone mentioned in this story, is comfortable with it so I thought I might write this down.

Updates will be unpredictable, but I will finish this. I already have an ending planned out so don't worry!

So anyway,  
I hope you enjoy!

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

## The chief's son.

### Chapter Notes

The legend begins...

It all started with a myth – an old-wives’ tale circling through a small town called ‘Raymore’.

“There’s a statue.”, the townsfolk would say. “Deep into the woods by the lake.”

The statue in question was of a man, dressed in princely clothes, complete with an elegant crown of pebbles resting on his head. He was built kneeling, with an arm draped across his knee, and the other resting on the grass, supporting his weight.

The statue was carved out in delicate detail, with fingerprints and single strands of hair etched clearly for the eye to see. He was wearing boots that reached up to his knees and a long cloak that shielded him from the morning sun.

The prince’s face, however, looked quite unusual, as it was barred by a stone mask with a crude smile carved onto it.

In no way did the mask deter the beauty of the stone prince. He looked to be as graceful and charming as ever, kneeling on the forest floor with a solemn look about him.

The statue was undoubtedly a stunning masterpiece – But no one knew who the sculptor was, or where the statue came from.

This, paired with the fact that the statue was built in the middle of nowhere, led the people to speculate that the stone prince was cursed by a witch long ago – a curse that forced the prince to remain as a statue for all of eternity.

“-and what other than, but ‘true love’, would break such a curse?”, the people would say, and so, the legend of the *Stone Prince* was born.

Of course, the maidens of the town swooned at the romantic story – bringing roses and peonies to the lonely statue, in hopes that their declaration of ‘love’ would break the prince’s curse.

But alas, little did they know, love doesn’t quite work that way – and so the flowers all dried up, and the Stone Prince remained kneeling in his spot, surrounded by patches of dried moss and withered up petals.

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George, the village chief's son, had a dead-set dream on exploring the mysterious world. The landscape beyond intrigued him and he was sick of seeing the same old houses and huts that surrounded his little village.

To the west, just beyond the river, there was a dense forest, begging to be explored. Its trees were packed together, and a faint trail of dirt hinted at a path that led into it.

To the north, a chain of mountains stood tall. Their peaks were encased in a layer of snow and dusty clouds surrounded them, proving them of their roaring heights.

To the east, there was a desert. Its golden sand glittered beneath the sun and a few cacti were littered here and there. Occasionally a drove of desert hares could be seen hopping around them.

Finally, to the south, there was a wide ocean. The waves often lapped at the shore, leaving behind sea-shells and pebbles for the village children to play with.

No one from his town had explored the four terrains and no one was willing to.

George on the other hand, wanted nothing more than to pick apart what secrets the town walls had kept him from. He wanted to run away to the highest mountain and touch the clouds that floated near. He wanted to explore the deepest caves to see what mysterious creatures he could find.

He wanted an adventure, a mystery – but being the chief of a little town would never grant him that.

But what was he to do when his mother refused to see reason?

Ever since the previous chief died, she had made a point of George living up to his father's expectations. She made sure he knew his place, and would often give him work to prove himself as worthy.

George hated it.

He didn't want to run errands to buy groceries. He didn't want to tend to the crops under the heat of the sun because it's 'what men should do'.

He didn't want this little provincial life of his, and tried his best to run away from it.

He came home later and later each night, taking long strolls out of town in search of a little thing called 'freedom'. He couldn't explain how thrilling it felt to walk a dozen miles under a sky full of twinkling stars.

He would walk far enough that the town lights couldn't be seen anymore, and come back home late enough that not a single eye would stay open. He felt free of any restraints and responsibilities.

He felt...*happy*.

But his mother – she disapproved of his late-night strolls.

George was always tired the next day, always staying in bed whenever he was supposed to be working. She grew tired of his constant 'laziness', as she called it.

One day, when George happened to come home just as the sun was rising, she snapped.

She screamed at George, throwing plates across the house, calling his dreams 'selfish' and 'unrealistic'.

She yelled at him, making him cower, and telling him that if he were to ever leave the gates of Raymore again, she'd make sure that he would never be allowed back home.

As much as George loved exploring, he didn't want to leave the people from his village behind.

He could name a few close friends that were dear to him, and he wouldn't trade them out for anything in the world.

So, George abided by his mother's wishes, and locked his dreams away tightly in his heart, throwing the key out to the furthest depths of the ocean.

He took responsibility, keeping the house neat and tidy, and tending to the crops outside as he was supposed to.

He never came home late, often staying inside his house and only leaving it to meet up with his friends.

He grew into a steady routine – wake up, eat, work, sleep – pleasing his mother immensely.

It wasn't the life George wanted.

But it was a life he was willing to accept.

*So long as one day, his dream would come true.*

## With a few good friends, (and a shovel or two).

### Chapter Summary

Sapnap is the 'best-est best friend ever', and he means it.

George was on his way towards the lake. He was tasked with getting fresh water for the house, as his dear old mother told him to. So here he was, begrudgingly carrying an empty wooden bucket as he trekked the same old cobblestone path again.

The road to the lake was one he knew by heart. He used it one too many times that it soon became boring, and George hated it.

He could've easily taken water from the village well, but his mother adamantly refused every time, claiming that well-water was simply '*too bitter*' for her taste.

George hated his mother.

“GEORGE!”

The boy startled, whipping his head around at the yell.

He sighed, as he saw that it was only his friend Sapnap, who was making his way towards him.

“*Georgie~*”

Feigning a groan, he kept his bucket on the ground, opening his arms for the hug he knew was coming.

Sapnap barreled into him, wrapping his arms around the frail boy tightly. He swayed them both around in a circle, and George felt a smile creeping up on him.

His lungs felt as if they were constricting, and he could feel his clothes getting rustled from the hug, but George would've wanted the moment to last forever if it could.

It felt nice to be held by someone.

“It's been so long, man. I *missed* you.”

“It's been like... two weeks, Sapnap.”

“*Exactly.*”

George huffed, pulling away from the hug, smiling at his friend.

Sapnap was someone he held close to his heart. The raven-haired boy had been there for him from

the very start. He was the only one who knew about George's dream, and the only one who fully supported it.

Though the boy's sense of humor was questionable, Sapnap had never failed to make him laugh, even through the toughest of days.

George couldn't have asked for a better friend.

"So," he started, gazing at his friend fondly. "What's up?"

Sapnap grinned.

"Oh you have no idea, *Georgie*. I have some *good* news for you."

At this, George threw him a questioning glance.

"For me? What do you mean?"

"Oh, you'll see. You're on your way to get water, right?"

George nodded, pointing a glance towards his bucket.

"Well, come on then, I'll show you."

With that, Sapnap wrapped a hand around George's wrist, and pulled him along the cobblestone road.

"A little birdie told me your mom was being a pig again, locking you up in the house like that-"

"Sapnap-"

"So, I, the best-est best friend anyone could *ever* ask for, came up with a plan to get you outta town."

"Sapnap, you know I can't-"

"Ah, ah, ah, don't interrupt now child. You'll soon thank me for being a *genius*."

Sapnap pulled him along, the lake revealing itself at the edge of their village.

"Sapnap, what are you doing?"

"Hush.", Sapnap said, and let go of his hand as they reached the lake.

At the other end, a giant wall blocked the way out of town, hiding a dense forest behind it.

George looked at his friend questioningly, wondering what he was up to.

"See that little bush over there?", Sapnap said, directing his gaze towards a sad-looking shrub.

"Look at the wall behind it."

George strained his eyes to see what his friend was on about. His gaze caught onto a dust of green, (or yellow in his case), among the wall of grey.

"An opening.", he stated.

Sapnap nodded.

"The builders probably didn't close it off, since it's hard to see the hole anyway.", he grinned.

"Plus, there aren't any guards there as well. Most likely because there's a forest right outside."

“And you want me to use it as a way out of town?”, George glanced over at him incredulously, “You know that there’s a lake in front of us, right?”

“-And that’s where *I* come in.”, Sapnap paused. “Or rather ‘came’ in. I don’t know.”

“What did you do?”

“Calm down it’s nothing bad, I swear.”, he held his arms up in a beckoning manner. “I just- may or may not have... *arranged* a secret path for you.”

George stared at him.

“Huh?”

“Just... look.”

With that, Sapnap bent down and rolled up his slacks, making his way to the water. He stepped into the lake and started to walk deeper into it.

“Sapnap, what are you-”, George’s words got caught in his throat.

He disbelievingly watched as his friend made his way to the middle of the lake, dry as a desert.

The water never rose from calf-length.

“How-”

“I filled the lake with pebbles!”, Sapnap shouted from the middle, and paused. “Well, not the whole lake, but, like a path from one end to the other.”

With slight hesitance, George left his bucket on the ground and slowly made his way towards his friend.

He felt the unstable road of pebbles crunch under his feet as he walked to the middle. He wondered just how long it would’ve taken for the raven-haired boy to pull off a stunt like this.

With a dawning sense of guilt, he realized that Sapnap had done this for *him*.

“How- how did you *do* this, Sapnap?”

Said boy scratched the back of his neck, seeming almost *embarrassed*.

“Well... with a few good friends, I guess... And a shovel or two.”, he paused for a moment. "You can use this path any time you like, you know. No one comes to the lake to get water anyway- so you can leave town and come back whenever you want to."

“Sapnap, this... I...”, George stumbled for a way to respond to the sweet gesture.

It wasn’t every day that a friend made a secret road of pebbles for you- through a neck-deep lake none the less.

He stared at Sapnap with a watery gaze.

“Well?”, his friend asked, a soft smile painted on his face. “What are you waiting for? Go see the outside world like you wanted to, dummy.”

George positively crashed into him, pulling the other into an even tighter hug than the last one.

“Woah there! You good, George?”

Sapnap slowly wrapped his arms around the boy. “I mean, I know you love me, but I didn’t know



it was *this* much-”

“*Thank you, Sapnap.*”, George pulled him impossibly closer, wanting his friend to know just how *grateful* he was. “You don’t know how much this means to me.”

A soft look painted itself across Sapnap’s face.

“Hey, it’s okay man, it’s the least I could do.”

“The *least*? Sapnap, you made an entire path for me through a flipping *lake*. Who does that?”

“Uh, someone cool as heck?”

“Shut *up.*”, George faked a punch to his shoulder, “You- you’re cool though. Really cool.”

“Yeah, yeah, I get it.”, he grinned. “Now get outta here Georgie, before somebody sees us.”

George nodded in response, pulling himself away from Sapnap.

“Just- Thank you. Again.”

Sapnap only smiled.

“No problem. Anything for a friend.”

With a final glance, George made his way towards the other end of the river, pausing at the small opening.

He turned around, waving at Sapnap, who in turn made a playful ‘shoo-ing’ motion at him.

Ducking under the crumbling wall, George was now outside of town, free to explore the world, *as he always wanted to.*

Once he got back, he needed to give Sapnap the biggest gift he could ever think of, that was for sure.

## **Aren't you quite the dream.**

### Chapter Summary

How weird can a walk through the forest get?

George could hear a few birds chirping in the distance. A shallow stream was running through the forest, gracing his ears with the sound of crackling water.

Footsteps padded along the forest floor, no doubt belonging to the little critters that lived there.

A puff of air left his lips, and his face broke out into a wide grin.

He playfully watched as the leaves crunched under his feet, picking his pace up into a steady skip.

Reaching his arms out, he spun in a circle, closing his eyes while he let the dizziness take over him.

He laughed.

He loved the view that surrounded him.

He loved the waning branches of the trees. He loved the luscious green vines that curled around them. He loved the dotted flowers that sprouted from the damp ground. He loved the blue sky that peaked out from the thick canopy of leaves.

He loved the sun, the grass, the pebbles, *everything*.

It felt good, being out of town...

*A twig snapped.*

George turned around at the noise, straining his ears to see where it had come from.

*A deafening growl filled the silence.*

George took a step back.

A rumbling sense of fear crawled up his veins, and encased his heart in an ice-cold grip. His legs stayed frozen on the spot, and his breathing slowed down to a minimum. He wondered if he was taking in air at all.

*Dozens of narrowed yellow eyes glared at him from the shadows.*

He gulped.

Slowly, he took another step back.

The leaves cracked under his feet.

With the most ferocious snarls, a pack of wolves leapt out, barking and snapping at the new intruder.

George all but positively *shrieked*.

He felt his legs carry him off without his own accord, away from the petrifying danger behind him. He tripped through the rough terrain, dodging and weaving through the drooping vines that surrounded him.

“GET AWAY FROM ME!”, he screamed, praying to every god out there that he would make it out alive... preferably in one piece.

Just a moment ago he was enjoying a nice walk through the forest. Now, he was screaming at the top of his lungs, almost as if he was competing with a banshee, while running away from a pack of beasts that was surely going to rip him apart.

The wolves were gaining on him – now following behind at an arm’s length.

“LEAVE ME ALONE!”, he shrieked, praying that the wolves would somehow understand him and be about on their merry ways at the request. “PLEASE!”, he added, just in case.

To his dismay the wolves didn’t let up on the chase. In fact, they were now closer than a needle’s length, and George felt the color drain from his face.

This is it.

He was about to die.

What would Sapnap say? What would his *mother* say?

He could already imagine her, yelling at the dead corpse of her son and everyone who mourned it, ‘*That rotten waste of space – I told him his dreams were foolish, but he followed them anyway. Now look where that got him!*’

He grimaced at the thought, regretting the fact that it would be the last thing on his mind before his inevitable death.

He felt himself trip onto a rock.

Several things happened right then.

*There was supposed to be ground here*, George thought vaguely, before he was free-falling off what appeared to be a cliff.

This time, he screamed for a different reason.

George braced himself for the impact, closing his eyes when he saw the on-coming trail of bushes.

He fell through a thicket of leaves.

Rough twigs and thorns scratched past every inch of his body that wasn't covered in wool. He cried out at the onslaught of pin-pricking cuts, trying to shield himself from the un-forgiving shrubs.

Then, the hard ground invited him.

The grass that covered it reduced little to no impact from his fall, and he felt himself wincing at the pain.

His head throbbed.

Every single part of his body was on fire, and his mind was left reeling at the sudden change of events.

He gradually stood up, holding the back of his head while looking up at where he had fallen from.

The wolves were still there. But with huffed breaths and defeated growls, they trudged back into the shade of the forest.

Amidst the pain, George felt himself sigh in relief.

He turned around.

He paused.

"...What?", he trailed off.

He wondered if he had hit his head a little too hard from the strange sight that greeted him. He was currently standing in a clearing. Tall trees and packed bushes surrounded the place, all except for the small portion of land he was in.

In the middle, there was a statue.

More specifically, a statue of a guy kneeling on the forest floor.

There wasn't anything particularly unnatural about it. In fact, the guy looked quite... *okay?*

No, what was unusual, was the mask that he seemed to be wearing. It was carved out in a circular-shape, a crude smile delicately etched onto it.

"Who are *you?*", George pondered aloud, and stepped closer to the moss-covered statue.

The statue didn't answer.

George tilted his head.

A sudden thought hit him.

He vaguely remembered a legend going around town – A legend of a Stone Prince who was cursed by a witch long ago.

Surely this statue couldn't be him... could it?

"I don't remember the Stone Prince having a mask this... stupid?"

He circled the statue, examining it.

Vines and roots were curled around it, almost as if they were protecting the guy. There were a few dead leaves scattered on top of it, and what appeared to be dried-up flowers were strewn about the place.

*Why are there flowers here?* George thought to himself, and realized that they must be gifts from the admirers of the statue.

"So, you really *are* the Stone Prince, huh?", George said, plopping down onto the grass in front of it. "Interesting..."

If he remembered correctly, the last time anyone had ever visited the Stone Prince was fifty years ago, before the town walls were even constructed.

Even then, only the town maidens had the pleasure of seeing the prince, as the legend goes that whoever falls in love with the statue would bring it back to life – and only maidens ever fell for a romantic story such as that.

George scoffed at the thought.

*Falling in love with a statue? Who in the right mind could manage that?*

"So, you once had people *dreadfully* fall in love with you huh?", he grinned. "Must be a right charmer to pull that off."

He pondered for a moment.

"It must be nice right? Being a prince and all – you get to do *whatever* you want.", he looked towards the statue, as if he was expecting it to answer.

It didn't register for a moment, to George, that he was talking to a *statue* – and statues, in fact, do not *speak*.

"You get to go on hunts, adventures, wars – well maybe wars are kind of awful but still, you get to be *free*."

George tilted his head to the sky, wondering why he was talking to the statue at all. The sun had only risen when he had left town. Now, it was beaming down from high noon. A thought nagged at him that he should really be going back home, and that it was getting too late for his mother to *not* get suspicious of him.

He threw away that thought. She would always be suspicious of him, no matter what he did. There was no point in going back now rather than later – she would yell at him anyway.

He scrunched his face up at the thought.

“You don’t have a strict parent like I do. You don’t get locked up inside the house like I do. You don’t get to do chores, and tasks and just-”, George groaned frustratedly. “You get *everything*. You have the *entire* world under your hand. You can run away as far as you want to, and come back *whenever* you want to. You get to read books, and paint, and play music – you’re a *prince*, after all.”

George leaned back, leveling the statue with a yearning gaze.

He thought for a moment, and let out a huff.

He smiled bitterly.

“Aren’t you quite the *dream*.”

# Where were you, George?

## Chapter Summary

WARNING : If you have trouble with parents, please reconsider reading this chapter.  
It has a few harsh words in it.

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

*“Aren’t you quite the dream.”*

The statement went unanswered, and George stayed staring at the statue.  
He didn’t know why he felt annoyed at the Stone Prince. He was just a statue, after all.

*Someone needs to clean him*, he thought in the back of his head. *I bet his royal highness is suffocating under all those vines...*

He shifted his gaze.

*Then again, maybe Princey here can finally know what it’s like to feel trapped...*

He shook out of his thoughts.

Why exactly was he personifying the statue? It wasn’t as if the prince can feel anything, or hear anything, or even *see* anything, *from that strange mask he’s always wearing*.

“What even is the point of that mask?”, he mused. “What, did the witch think you were *that* handsome for the maidens *not* to fall in love with you?”

He snickered.

“I bet that’s why your curse isn’t broken yet – how can you expect *anyone* to fall in love with a face as *ridiculous* as that?”

If George didn’t know any better, he could’ve sworn he felt the statue glaring at him.

“-Or did you actually choose to wear that mask on your own?”, he sneered. “In that case, I send my deepest condolences to your kingdom. Just *imagine*. The messenger would shout ‘*Make way for the Prince!*’, and the villagers would turn around, only to see *that!*”

George gestured towards the mask, and laughed hysterically. “That would be a real sight, wouldn’t it!”

He wondered what his life had come to.

If Sapnap ever learned that George spent most of his walk insulting a defenseless, stone *statue*, he would most definitely throttle him.

He sighed.

“Well then Princey, it was nice meeting you and all but I really need to head back home.”

He shuddered, thinking about what his mother would even say to him for being this late.

Reluctantly, he stood up from the grass, brushing off a few twigs and leaves that stuck to his clothes.

“See you later then.”, he said to the prince, unintentionally planning to visit again.

With that he trudged the unfamiliar path through the forest, uncaring of the setting sun in the distance.

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“Where were you, George?”

The words were said in an eerily calm voice.

George felt his hands clasp onto the bottom of his t-shirt. He felt lightheaded, and his eyes were shifting anywhere except for the person in front of him.

He twisted the piece of clothing, anxiously willing for his mother to direct her piercing gaze elsewhere.

“I said, *where were you, George?*”, she repeated.

“Out.”, he answered quietly.

“*Out?*”

“Not- not out of town. Just-”

“George, darling, *don’t make me ask again.*”

She took a step closer to George, who in turn recoiled.

“Where, *specifically*, were you?”

He gulped.

“I was- I was just-”, his lungs felt tight, and he felt sweat dripping down the back of his neck. “I was just with my friends, mother, by the town market. I lost track of time. I’m- I’m sorry.”

“Sorry doesn’t cut it!”, her voice boomed across the house, and George desperately tried not to cry.

He remembered what happened last time, when he did.

*‘If you don’t stop that whining this instant, I’ll **give** you something to cry about!’*

George closed his eyes, holding his breath.

“You should’ve brought the water back by mid-day! Now look!”, she took ahold of his collar and shoved him towards the window, pointing his gaze towards the night sky. “*This* is the time you decide to come back home?”



George shuddered. He felt his nerves fire up, and he was breathing harder than when he was *literally* being chased by a pack of wolves.

*What an adventure that was...*

“Do you know how *worried* I was?” his mother screamed, and he felt the pin-pricks of guilt steadily crawl up his veins.

*Maybe he shouldn't have stayed out so late.*

She shoved him, pushing him towards the wooden staircase that led up to George's room.

“I'm disappointed in you, George.”, she finally spat, shaking her head at him solemnly. “I don't know why I even bother with you.”

With that, she left him on the staircase and made her way towards her bedroom.

George was left staring at the space his mother once stood, desperately trying will back the tears in his eyes.

*You don't deserve to cry about this. You made her worry for no reason. Why can't you stay inside for once? Exploring is just a silly dream, it won't take you anywhere.*

George dejectedly trudged up the staircase, plopping down on his bed tiredly.

*If only he could be someone else. If only...*

He paused.

*If only he could be like the prince in the forest- free to chase his dream without being a disappointment.*

He sighed.

*If only his mother would understand...*

---

*Deep into the forest a withering voice spoke.*

*‘So, you finally found company again, huh? After what- fifty years?’*

*A cackle followed.*

*‘-And it’s a boy nonetheless, how unfortunate for you.’*

*A curling hand smoothing across a mask. A nail, scraping along chiseled stone.*

*‘Your kingdom is still waiting for the lost prince, by the way. The place is in ruins. Soldiers are dying, children are being orphaned – it’s such a pretty sight.’*

*A long cloak, brushing against the forest floor, billowing against the wind.*

*‘Only you can save them, can’t you? If you wake up-’*

*A shuddering laugh.*

*‘If you wake up, I will die, and you will become the rightful ruler of the throne’*

*Glowing eyes, glaring in disdain at a statue.*

*‘But you won’t ever wake up again, Prince Clay. I’ll have you know that.’*

*A sneering smile. A snap of fingers. A blast of light.*

*A deep, menacing laugh, and then-*

*Silence...*

*The forest returned to its tranquil sleep.*

## Chapter End Notes

Just saying, please don't blame yourself for "hurting", your parents while following your dreams. If they don't understand you, that's their fault.

At the same time, don't make it hard for them to understand you. Explain why it's your dream and why you want to follow it.

All dreams are valid as long as they don't hurt anyone, so please don't think you're a "disappointment" for having a "childish"/"useless" dream.

It's your life, you get to do whatever you want with it. so dream big, i guess. and stay safe <3

## What's there to hide?

### Chapter Summary

Sapnap asks about George's day.

George woke up to a sharp pain on his forehead.

“What...?”, he muttered as he slowly sat up, letting the morning light seep into his vision. He groggily rubbed his eyes, stretching his arms out, while he let out an intense yawn.

A stone flew past his line of sight.

It thumped along the wooden floor, coming to a stop next to George's bed, where a pile of rocks lay innocently beside it.

George squinted.

“Huh?”

He turned towards the window, ducking as he narrowly missed another stone that flew past his head.

George lifted his covers, and stormed his way towards the window, making a point to yell at whoever thought it was a good idea to throw rocks into his room at the break of dawn.

His faltered as his eyes set on a familiar, bandana-clad boy.

“Sapnap?”

“Hey Georgie!”, the boy in question yelled, dropping a pile of pebbles he was carrying. “Get down here!”

George smiled, already forgetting about yelling at him.

“Alright, hold on!”

With that, George pelted down the staircase, making his way towards the front door eagerly to meet his friend.

“*Ahem.*”, a voice sounded from the living room, and George halted in his steps.

“-And where do you think you're going, son?”

His mother didn't even look at him. She was seated at a desk in the middle of the room, a pile of parchment neatly stacked in front of her. She had a pair of thin-rounded glasses settled on the tip of her nose. With a straight posture, she signed over the papers one by one, setting them aside into another neat stack.

George guessed it had something to do with being the chief-in-standing.

"Um, I was just meeting my friend, mother."

"Is it the same group of friends you were with last night?"

"No, mother."

"Is it that Sapnap boy, then?"

"Yes mother.", he nodded. "He... wanted to show me something."

His mother pointed a look towards him. She raised an eyebrow.

"And how should I know you won't stay out till sun-set again?"

George shifted his weight.

"I promise to return by mid-day, mother. I won't be a moment later."

She kept her gaze on George for what felt like hours to him.

Finally, with a wary look, she said,

"Very well then. See to it that you keep your word, son. And don't return a minute late. Once you return, I need you to mop the floors, water the crops, dust the cabinets, and re-heat the water for a bath."

"Yes, mother.", he looked down meekly.

"Go on then- your chores will be waiting for you."

Without a moment of hesitation, George creaked open the wooden door and stepped out into the sun.

He turned around, spotting Sapnap, and rushed over to him to give a tight hug.

"Georgie~ What's up, man?"

George laughed, all thoughts of his mother seeping away into the corner of his mind.

"Hah, nothing much. Just feeling on top of the world, 'cause my *dearest* friend showed me a way to get out of town!"

"*Hush*, George.", Sapnap hissed, covering his mouth. "The *witch* could be listening."

George felt an uncontrollable burst of giggles rise out from his chest at the statement.

"*Sapnap*-", he mumbled against his hand.

"Shush, love, just follow me.", the rave-haired boy answered, and dragged the other towards a random path-way, leading to the middle of town.

“So,” Sappnap stated, weaving them both through the crowd of Raymore. “Tell me *everything*.”

George paused.

“*Well...*”, he silently thought of the best way to lay out the story to his friend.

“So, I walked through the forest and I saw trees and vines and *flowers* and *leaves* and-”

“Not to break it to you or anything, but you do realize we have those in town too, right?”

“Well yeah, but you see, I saw a pack of wolves too!”

“*Wolves?*”

“I mean, I feared for my life when I was running away from them, but then I tripped and fell off a cliff.”

“A *CLIFF?*”

“Yeah, but it only hurt for a while, don’t worry. The wolves left me alone after that. What was weird though, was this *statue* at the bottom.”

George finally looked over at his friend, who had an incredulous gaze trained on him.

He knew what he said sounded downright unbelievable, but what was there to say? It was the solemn truth, after all.

“Let me get this straight.”, Sappnap drew in a deep breath, “You got chased by a pack of wolves, and you fell off a *cliff*... and you thought a *statue* was weird, of all things?”

“Yes, pretty much.”, George nodded. “Although, I guess what made it weird was that I talked to it.”

“You what-”

“Do you happen to know anything about the Stone Prince?”

“The Stone-”, Sappnap shook his head. “George, are you *okay?*”

“I mean, apart from my mom yelling at me, ‘cause I came home too late, I’d say I’m doing pretty good-”

“*George.*”

George snapped his gaze towards his friend at the worried tone. Sappnap looked as if he was honestly concerned about him, and he felt guilty to cause such a reaction out of him.

“Hey, I’m okay Sappnap. I mean, I went through a wild ride yesterday, but thinking about it now...”, he smiled at the ground. “I feel... pretty *happy*, actually.”

Sappnap held the gaze for a moment longer, then finally sighed.

“If you say so, George... But, please tell me if there’s anything wrong, okay?”

George gave a gentle smile towards him.

“You’re a good friend, Sap.”

The boy snickered.

“Oh yeah, I *know*. What was it that you said yesterday?”, Sapnap pretended as if he was pondering for a second. “Oh yes, you were like, ‘*Oh, Sapnap! My knight in shining armor! How ever am I grateful to have a handsome and loving friend as you~*’”

“Shut *up*.”, George buried his face in his hands in embarrassment. “I did *not* say that!”

“Sure, you didn’t-”, Sapnap teased, then paused.

“But anyway, what was it that you wanted to know? Something about the Stone Prince or what-not?”

They stopped when they reached the village-well, built at the center of town.

“Yeah... the Stone Prince.”

George turned towards his friend.

“That statue, that I found – he looked like he might’ve been the Stone Prince. You’ve heard of the legend, right?”

Sapnap hesitantly nodded.

“It’s an old one alright...”

“Do you know the story?”

“Not the full one. Just the basics – a prideful prince, an angry witch, a curse...”

George threw him a questioning glance.

“Prideful?”

“Yeah, prideful.”, Sapnap answered. “You don’t know? Well, apparently the Stone Prince was cursed because of his arrogance.”

“Arrogance huh? Serves him right, then.”

“*Serves him right?*”, he parroted. “What do you mean? I thought you bonded with the statue and all?”

“I didn’t *bond* with it.”, George furrowed his eyebrows. “If anything, I *argued* with it.”, he paused. “Hmm, I’m glad I did, since his ego is the problem here.”

When he looked over to Sapnap, he could tell that the other was getting wary over whether George was as okay as he claimed to be.

“I’m starting to have second thoughts about building that bridge for you...”

“Oh, what do you want me to do, Sap? Go over and apologize to him?”

Sapnap huffed.

“Wait till the curse breaks. You’re going to get throttled by a well-trained prince.”

George laughed.

“Ha! As if! Some girl must fall in love with him for the curse to break. Tell me, have you *seen* what his face looks like? I swear to every deity I can name, that curse isn’t *ever* going to break.”

Sapnap gave him an amused look.

“You sure do hate the guy a lot.”

George huffed.

“Yeah... I guess I do.”

Suddenly, a thought struck his mind.

He looked up, his gaze catching a lonely building standing by the cobble road.

“Bad.”

Sapnap followed his gaze.

“Bad...?”

“He’ll know more about the Stone Prince.”

“I thought we established that you hated the guy, why do you want to know more about him?”

“Because-”, George paused for an answer, coming up short when his mind didn’t provide any.

“Because, shut up.”

Sapnap fake gasped, holding a hand above his heart.

“*Georgie!* How could you!”

“Are you coming with me or not?”

At that, Sapnap dropped his façade, shoving him away with a smile.

“No, Georgie. Unfortunately, I have this huge trade I need to deal with back at the farm. Some rich guy just bought a barn full of potatoes.”, he scoffed. “What a pig.”

“Isn’t that good for you though?”

“Meh... He’s still a pig.”, Sapnap paused. “Well. You better get going then, Georgie. Don’t be late this time.”

Just like that, George’s mood withered.

“Yeah... I know.”

He slowly smiled at Sapnap.

“See you later, then. Hope the deal goes well for you.”

“Thank you, Georgie. See you later!”

George then turned over to Bad’s house, trudging along the brittle road.

He hoped the kind librarian wasn’t out today.

---



*Cecilia...*

*Once a great kingdom, known for its magnificence, throughout the land.*

*An old tale as follows-*

*A sweet day, turned sour.*

*A celebration, turned messy.*

*A beautiful kingdom, now in ruins.*

*A sharp laugh. Glowing white eyes. The mirth of a monster.*

*“Prince Clay of Cecilia, your pride will be your downfall.”*

*A hand raised.*

*Shocked gasps from the people of Cecilia.*

*A billowing dark cloak.*

*“You are blind, your highness. Blinded by what is worthy and what is fraud. Blinded by what is love, and what is worship.”*

*The tears of a mother.*

*The dismay of a father.*

*“You aren't fit to rule this kingdom, and till you earn your right to face me, you will become what you truly are.”*

*A cruel smile.*

*“You will become a nobody- a faceless, emotionless shell of a person, you might as well be a statue.”*

*A snap of fingers. A blinding white light.*

*“And till you prove to someone, that you are worthy enough, that you can be loved for who you are and not your standing, you will become nothing, but a statue of stone.”*

*A hopeless story.*

*An aching legend.*

*An old wives' tale...*

# Was it a witch?

## Chapter Summary

Some questions might be answered...

George was about to knock on Bad's door, when the loud shout rang out from the library.

"SKEPPY!"

A moment later, a boy with dark hair ran out from Bad's home, shoving past George as loud, angry screeches followed him.

"GET BACK HERE, SKEPPY! I'M GOING TO KILL YOU!"

George turned back to the library, only to get a face full of ebony hair and stormy eyes. He didn't have time to react before the librarian crashed into him, sending them both tumbling towards the ground in an ungraceful heap.

The mocking laugh, of a boy they knew all too well, faded off into the distance.

They groaned.

"Bad... What the *heck*?", George whined, as he tried to push the added weight off him.

"George?", the librarian got up, shifting himself into an up-right position. "What brings you here?", he said, his voice changing into a cheerful, fluffy tone that left George with an imaginary whiplash.

He sat up.

"*What brings me here?*", he parroted. "You're the librarian, why do you think I'm here?"

Bad's eyes lighted up.

"Oh, so you're here to borrow another book? Please, be my guest!"

Bad offered a hand to his friend, who was still seated on the floor, and George gratefully accepted it, pulling himself up with the librarian's help.

"Well I don't want to borrow a *book* exactly – I want...", he trailed off, as he took note of the questionable state his friend was in.

Bad's hair was adorned in a sea of dark-red petals. They cascaded down his shoulders, floating gently into a neat pile on the floor.

"Are those... roses?"

Bad looked confused for a moment, then caught George's gaze staring at the top of his head.

He sighed.

"No, they're Carnations."

George trained a questioning look towards him.

Bad only rolled his eyes, and pulled his friend into the library.

George gasped at the sight.

The place was *flooded* in an army of Carnations. Every shelf, every table was covered in dark-ruby petals and emerald leaves.

He turned towards Bad, who looked to be *seething* at the state his dear library was in.

"Skeppy thought it would be a good idea to pull a joke on me. I don't know what's wrong with him but he keeps doing this *all* the time! It's infuriating!"

George squinted.

"... And his idea of a joke is giving you... flowers?"

"Weeds! They're most definitely weeds, which he probably pulled out from Tubbo's garden."

"Last time I checked, Tubbo uses Lilacs for his bees... not Carnations."

"Well yesterday he threw Lilacs at me too!", Bad huffed out. "He's annoying."

"... Sure.", George shook his head, unwilling to think about the two's... friendship? He didn't know *what* the infamous duo called themselves as, but he didn't want to be a part of it, that's for sure.

"Well, okay then. Skeppy is... weird-"

"Annoying."

"Yes annoying. But I came to ask you about something.", George thought for a moment. "Well, it's quite stupid. But I was hoping you would know a thing or two about it."

"What is it?", the librarian asked, training a questioning look towards him.

"Well. It's about the Stone Prince."

Bad's eyes scrunched up for a moment. Then, they widened in realization.

"The *Stone Prince* – Oh, that's such an old story."

"Do you know the entirety of it?"

"Oh, *do* I?", Bad gleamed, pulling a petal-covered chair out for George to sit in. "My mother used to tell me that story *all* the time. It's quite a long one though, so you might want to take a seat."

George looked at his friend, an eager feeling welling up inside him.

“Tell me everything. Please.”

Bad grinned.

---

Cecilia was a great kingdom.

Its walls were built to touch the sky, and the gates were large and open, for travelers of all kind to visit the place and admire the prosperous land.

The kingdom was ruled by a wise King, and a gentle Queen.  
They had a son, who they named ‘Clay’, and they both loved him *dearly*.

Fortunately for the kingdom, the Prince grew up to be a great warrior, defending his kingdom from anyone who dared to attack it. He kept his people safe, and took care into protecting his loving home.

In the end, he was a *hero*.

But, as the people started praising the prince for his wit and bravery, he started to indulge himself in the attention.  
He would smile at the admirers who sung his name aloud, and would grin at the maidens who threw flowers at his feet.

The people put him on a pedestal, and the prince *believed* he belonged on a pedestal.

He grew more confident, more *arrogant*. He let his pride consume him unknowingly...

It was the prince’s twenty-first birthday when it happened.

The kingdom was throwing an extravagant celebration – Prince Clay was at an age where he would become the *crowned* prince of Cecilia. So, everyone, no matter if they were a noble or a servant, was invited.

The day was in high spirits, with the sun beaming down on the magnificent kingdom and its pristine-white walls, when suddenly an evil presence made its way to the castle.

A cold feeling swept over the people of Cecilia, and they turned towards the palace entrance, where a mysterious hooded figure stood alone.

Hushed mummers broke out of the people, nervous chatter making its way to where the King stood.

He hit his staff on the ground, ceasing the crowd into a hushed silence.

“State your business.”, the King’s powerful voice swept across the castle, and the people stared tensely.

The cloaked figure made its way to the middle of the hall.

“Your majesty,”, a scratchy voice spoke out. “My name is Brine.”

Shocked gasps broke out from the kingdom, the nervous chatter increasing in volume as the King and Queen shared tense glances with each other.

Prince Clay remained unaware of the troubling presence.

Brine – He was a powerful sorcerer, who practiced magic that was darker than any evils of the world. He was a ruthless soul, seeking nothing but power and glory, but the people of Cecilia thought he would never dare to present himself inside such a fortified kingdom.

“What do you want from us?”, the Queen asked this time, and a sharp cackle drifted from the hooded figure.

“Well, your majesty,”, Brine started. “I only wish to rule over Cecilia.”

“You have no need to rule our kingdom.”, the King stated. “Leave at once!”

Brine only raised his hand.

Dark clouds casted a shadow over the palace.

A loud clap of thunder rang out through the air.

A gust of wind whistled through the hall-way, and the front doors slammed shut.

The prince drew his sword from his sheath, the knights following behind by drawing theirs.

Brine only chuckled.

“You’re making a mistake, your majesty.”, a confident step forward, “I’ve learned all the dark spells, know every little thing there is to know about magic – I can make this kingdom crumble like a sandcastle.”

A sneer, a flash of light.

Brine lowered his hood, revealing a pair of glowing-white eyes and short-brown hair.

“-So, I suggest you kneel before me, lest I use my magic to curse your pretty little kingdom and *everyone* who lives in it.”

With a snap of his fingers, a bright light struck over the palace, a startling clap of thunder following close behind.

The people yelped, scrambling to find shelter behind each other, cowering from the cloaked man in fear.

A troubled look rested over the King’s face.

“I only ask for a simple thing, your majesty.”, Brine paused. “One small wish – Kneel before me, forfeit your kingdom, and I’ll let you and your people go unharmed.”

A tense silence befell in the castle.

A moment passed...

Then another...

The King lowered himself to the ground, leveling a determined glare at Brine.

“Brine. I forfeit my kingdom-”

“Father-”, the prince protested, but was immediately hushed by the Queen.

“Please son, don’t-”

The prince paid no heed to his mother, whipping around to glare at Brine, who only smirked in response.

“Leave this castle at once! You have no right over the throne!”

“And you do?”

The prince stormed over to where Brine was standing, ignoring the cries of his mother and the demands of his father to stay still.

“*I* am the crowned prince of Cecilia. *You* are nothing but a simple peasant who blindly lusts after

power. Unfortunately for you, you won't ever get the satisfaction you seek."

"I'd say it would be quite satisfying to rule over the most powerful kingdom known to man.", Brine grinned. "And unlike you, crowned prince of Cecilia, I've *worked* to guarantee my position at the throne."

The prince growled.

"Leave my kingdom alone – I challenge you to a duel, a fair fight with nothing but our weapons, and if you *win*, the kingdom is yours.", he paused. "If you lose, you will be banished from the kingdom, and you shall never return."

"Clay-"

A sharp cackle broke out through the palace, making the people shift uneasily.

"I don't need to prove *anything* to you, your highness. In fact, I believe it to be the other way around."

The mood shifted.

An invisible blanket laid itself across the hall, the air filling with thick, tense silence.

"You're prideful, your highness, believing that you are *entitled* to the throne simply because you were born under it."

A challenging stare.

"You amount to nothing but a statue of stone. You have no dreams, no feelings, nothing but empty pride from the praises you get from being a *prince*."

A wicked smile.

*"Prince Clay of Cecilia, your pride will be your downfall..."*

---

"...That's *it*?", George exclaimed.

He didn't understand. Where was the curse? Where was the kingdom? *Where was the rest of the story?*

If Brine cursed the prince to be a statue, then surely Cecilia wouldn't be grounded too far *from* the statue, right?

... And if that statue really *was* the Stone Prince, then what was up with the creepy mask?



George felt as if he was left with more questions than before he heard the ‘full’ story.

Bad only looked at him incredulously.

“What do you mean, *that’s it?* – I just told you an amazing story!”

“You didn’t even *finish* it!”

Bad scratched his head.

“Well, they say the best stories don’t have an ending.”

There was a pause.

“... I’m pretty sure *no one’s* ever said that.”

“Well, it doesn’t matter, okay? That’s all I know about the Stone Prince – In fact, that’s probably what anyone’s ever known about the Stone Prince.”

George groaned.

“But I don’t *get* it, Bad. Where’s Cecilia? How do you break the curse? And what’s up with that *stupid* mask?”

“*Mask?* What mask?”

Another groan.

“Look, it doesn’t matter. Do you know how to break the curse at least?”

Bad furrowed his eyebrows, and seemed to be lost in thought for a moment.

“I... don’t know.”, he paused. “But I heard there was a rumor that it was true love?”

“Oh, don’t get me started with that. *True love* doesn’t exist. We both know that’s just nonsense.”

“And the rest of the story isn’t?”

George only grumbled in response.

“Well, the rest is more reasonable...”

Bad shook his head, then paused.

“Why do you even want to know more about the Stone Prince anyway? You don’t usually borrow books about fairy tales...”

George froze.

Bad knew about George’s banishment from the outside world, but he didn’t know if they were close enough that Bad would keep a secret from his mom, who was practically the village chief.

“I was just... interested. The stories about the statue resurfaced so I thought I might learn a bit more about it.”

Bad slowly nodded.

“Okay... If you say so.”, he clapped his hands together. “Well, noon’s arriving, I better go get lunch. You should too.”

“Yeah...”, George nodded.

A second passed.

Then another.

...It was *noon*.

“IT’S NOON!”

“AH!”

“SORRY BAD, I NEED TO GO, THANKS FOR THE STORY!”

Footsteps rang across the library, and Bad was left standing alone in a sea of red petals.

The librarian paused, staring after his friend with a worried look. Then, he sighed, gazing at the cluttered petals he *somehow* needed to clean up.

He kicked his leg, and a few of them fluttered in the air for a moment, slowly floating down to the floor again into a heap.

“Skeppy...”, he started. “I *hate* you.”

## Dream was taken.

### Chapter Summary

Names are quite important.

### Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

*“The boy wishes to learn more about you.”*

*A grimace. A hate-filled glare.*

*“It’s nothing to worry about, however. He’s an explorer by heart- of course he would long to unveil the ‘mysteries’ of the world.”*

*A sneer.*

*“In due time, he will get tired of you as well, and you will rest again for however long it takes for someone else to find you.”*

*A step. A raised hand.*

*“Don’t get your hopes up, Prince Clay, you won’t need to duel me for a **very** long time.”*

*A snap of fingers. A flash of light.*

*A lonely statue...*

---

---

George was standing on a beach.

The sun was only rising, and he had told his mother that he would fetch water and be back by noon. The filled pails of water already sat by the village-well. So, the walk back home wouldn't take nearly as long as it took to drag the buckets back from the lake.

Which left him with enough time in the world to wander aimlessly along the beach.

The seashells poked at his feet as he trudged along the cream-white sand, and the cold gusts of air left him shivering at the bite. He found himself wobbling whenever a particularly strong gust of wind grazed past him, and he frantically tried to keep himself upright.

He smiled.

*He wouldn't want to be anywhere else.*

George let out a deep breath, the end of it morphing into a laugh. Like the walk through the forest, he felt an exhilarating emotion welling inside him, and he reminded himself of the gift he still needed to make for his thoughtful friend. With a dazed look, he shifted his eyes towards the ground where the seashells seemed to be glimmering gold underneath the sun.

*Sapnap would love a gift made of them*, he thought in his head, and dropped to the ground to pick out a few of the prettiest shells.

By the time the sun had reached mid-way till noon, he found a few scallops, some sand dollars, some conch shells, and a few zebra shells. Scallops were the most common out of the bunch and George found himself trying to balance the number out by searching for other eye-catching shells.

He paused as a flash of blue swept over his vision.

Shifting over, he dusted the sand, and an indigo-colored scallop with patchy white markings revealed itself to him. It was rather large for a shell, filling his palm up entirely, and he found himself gasping at the pretty thing.

The gasp soon turned into an unbelieving scoff as he sighted the familiar image painted on the shell.

A crude smiley-face was drawn out by the white markings of the scallop, matching the face of someone he knew all too well.

“Oh, Princey, you’re going to *love* this.”, he said, as he dropped the shell into the pile, and promptly got back to work on finding other shells for Sapnap.

It’s been a few days since he last visited the Stone Prince, not having enough time to sneak out of town, with all the chores piling up on him. He was working left to right, with Sapnap occasionally visiting to keep him company.

Of course, he did eventually convince his mother to let him out of the house, but he didn’t want to waste his time by walking through the forest, as he had already seen it anyway.

Instead, he was here, at the beach, collecting shells for his dear friend.

Though, a small part of him wished he was somewhere else...

There was something almost *mysterious* about the Stone Prince. It made him want to... figure it out, unveil the secrets that the statue seems to be hiding.

In truth, it felt as if George was talking to a real person rather than a statue, and he didn’t know whether that indeed was the case or that he was just lonely.

*More likely the latter part*, George thought to himself solemnly.

Sapnap was one of the closest friends he had, and even then, they only got to talk for a day or two per week, and *even then*, it was only for a candle-length amount of time.

George shook his thoughts. He needn’t to dwell on it too much.

His task now was to figure out how exactly he was going to bring the pile of shells back to town, and *what* exactly he should be making out of them.

George sighed.

He needed to come up with a plan, and by the looks of how the sun was nearing mid-day, he didn’t have much time left.

---

By the time noon arrived, the shells were piled into a merchant’s basket that George happened to stumble by along the shore, and the blue smiley-faced shell sat in the corner, neatly separated from the rest of his friends.

He decided that he wanted to make a dream-catcher.

It would be *perfect* for his friend, as Sapnap had said he was dealing with a nightmare or two in a passing comment.

George looked at him worriedly back then, but his friend only reassured him that he was fine, and made countless of jokes about it that seemed to suggest that he wasn't too bothered by them.

*"It's okay Georgie, honest. The guy I dream about isn't even that scary. He's blind, for merlin's sake! He doesn't stand a chance... I mean, sure, he has magic and all but who cares? He's no match for a Knight of Raymore like me!"*

*"You aren't a knight, Sapnap."*

*"Are you sure? If I recall, I swear I was a 'knight in shining armor', as you said-"*

*"Sapnap, shut it, I said no such thing."*

*"But you thought it."*

*"Thinking isn't the same as stating it."*

*"AHA! SO, YOU DO THINK I'M YOUR KNIGHT IN SHINING ARMOR!"*

*"My ears..."*

That had been the end of the conversation.

Sapnap may have pretended it was another one of his jokes but George *knew* when Sapnap was struggling – and he wanted to help somehow.

Who knows, maybe Sapnap having a dream-catcher above his bed could sooth him into a dreamless sleep.

George could only hope it would work.

With a huffed breath, George got up, and started his way back to town.

He hoped the dream-catcher would at least make his friend happy.

---

The moon had risen considerably in the sky, and George found himself unable to sleep.

He was tossing and turning in his bed, sore from the multitude of chores that his mother piled on him for the day.

The basket of shells lay hidden underneath his bed, a thread of string and a few sticks lay next to them in preparation for Sapnap's gift

George had already planned out what he wanted to do for the next day. He wanted to explore the mountains to the north, and before that he needed to make the dream-catcher for Sapnap.

*...he didn't have enough time to visit the Stone Prince.*

George sat up.

His mother was asleep.

*Surely, she wouldn't notice if he came back before the break of dawn, right?*

He was out of the bed.

He grabbed the blue shell from the basket and crept down the staircase.

He didn't let out a single breath until he was out of the door.

He sighed.

Before he knew it, he was running over to the lake, hidden by the night sky and the waning moon.

He padded along the forest, ducking under vines and branches as he hoped and prayed that the forest animals would stay asleep.

He got to the cliff's edge, and with a help of a nearby vine, he lowered himself gently into the clearing where the Stone Prince sat.

The vines were still covering the prince from head to toe, his signature smiley-face mask barely peaking out from the leaves.

*Someone really does need to clean the statue*, George thought, and he remembered his house held a total of three water-buckets.

He had no intention of cleaning the statue himself though – he had far too many chores at home, and he wouldn't waste his time cleaning up a statue of a spoiled prince anyway...

*...why did he want to visit the Stone Prince again?*

“Ah, so we meet again, Princey.”, George finally quipped as he made his way over to the statue. “I come bearing a gift.”

He lifted his hand, and presented the blue shell he was carrying to the prince.

A dull beam of moonlight caught it, and made it shimmer in an ethereal way. The smiley-face on it proudly beamed at the Stone Prince.

“Look, it has the same stupid smile as you.”, George said, a matching grin painted on his face. “I thought you might like it.”

He laid the shell in front of the statue, and crouched down to sit beside it.

A moment passed...

Then another...

“You know... I couldn't sleep because of you.”, George murmured. “I... don't know why.”

...

“It's quite annoying.”

...



“But what would you know, you’re probably sleeping in there as I speak.”

He leveled a glare at the statue.

“You better not be. I came all the way here to give you that shell, so you better be awake, Princey.”

A pause.

“You know, I hate calling you that... ‘*Princey*’ – Based on the legend, you actually *like* being called a prince. That’s why you got turned into a statue, right? You let it get into your head.”

George shifted his weight, leaning back on the grass as he gazed up at the night sky.

“So, how about I help you out with that? Shall I call you Clay?”

George scrunched his nose.

“Nah. Clay is such a stupid name; your parents were on something when they named you that.”

He could feel the offended energy radiating off the statue.

He hoped the legend wasn’t a true story, and that the prince wouldn’t one day wake up, and throttle him eventually.

“I’m going to make a name up for you, and it won’t be a such a ridiculous name like *Clay*.”

George pondered for a moment, seeming to think of a name that would suit the Stone Prince.

“It has to be meaningful...”

The Stone Prince was the first treasure he came across while he was exploring after all... George could insult the statue all he wants, but in truth, the Stone Prince was the beginning of his *dream* coming true, in a way.

George paused as a name made its way into his head.

“How about...”, he trailed off, testing the name out in an empty whisper.

“...*Dream?*”

He smiled.

*He felt as if the prince would like that name...*

## Chapter End Notes

I would like to clarify that personally, I don't think 'Clay' is a 'stupid' or 'such a ridiculous' name.

In fact I quite like it, but George doesn't in this story so yeaah- the name must be insulted, as per his wishes...

## Worth the wait.

### Chapter Summary

Sapnap...

The sun was glaring on George when he finally woke up.

The light was peeking through the thick canopy of leaves, and was gracing his face with such brightness that he grumbled at it.

“Urgh.”, he groaned, and proceeded to rub his eyes to lessen the black spots in his vision.

George couldn’t figure out *how* and *when* he fell asleep.

All he knew was that after he deemed the Stone Prince’s new name as ‘*Dream*’, he went on rambling to the said prince about nothing and everything at all – talking about his friend Sapnap, how he learned about the prince’s story through Bad, how he was planning to make a ‘dream-catcher’ from the shells he collected as well.

*“You would like a dream-catcher too, wouldn’t you? Since it’s your new name and all...”*

...

*“Well I’m not making you one. All you’re getting is that stupid shell, so you better appreciate it.”*

...

*“It won’t wither away like those delicate flowers your admirers brought to you.”*

...

*“I don’t get why you even had all those maidens fall at your feet. You surely don’t have the looks for it, if that horrible mask is anything to go by, and you surely didn’t do anything ‘kind’ to warrant that kind of praise...”*

...

*“Well, maybe you were once kind. I wouldn’t know... Or maybe... it was because you were a warrior that people fell for you?”*

...

*“You did stand up to that powerful sorcerer... what was his name again? Brian or something?”*

...

...

*“You certainly were brave... weren’t you Dream?”*

George shook out of his thoughts.

Did he *compliment* the prince, of all things?

It must’ve been the fact that he was tired, nothing more. He did faintly recall the feeling of drowsiness creeping up on him after those words were uttered.

That must’ve been when he finally fell asleep.

George stretched his arms out into a yawn and blearily looked up at the sun again.

“Why does it have to be dawn already? I wanted to sleep some more...”

A thought nagged at him from the back of his mind.

...

*...wasn't he supposed to be back in town by dawn?*

George got up.

“...I am so *dead*.”

---

To George's utter joy and relief, his mother had bought the excuse of, “*I just went on a morning jog mother, nothing more.*”, and left George alone to finish his chores for the day.

It wasn't usual, for his mother to fall for a lie that blatant, but he sure wasn't complaining.

After the floor was swept, the furniture was dusted, the clothes were washed, and the crops were watered, George finally padded up the staircase and into his room, and flopped onto the bed.

George felt an uncomfortable ache in his neck, from spending the night on the forest floor, and using the prince's hand as a pillow.

In hindsight, he shouldn't have let himself talk for that long.

He should've kept his thoughts inside, and not waste it on a statue that wouldn't hear him anyway.

*...but it felt so good to get that all out of his chest.*

George knew he had Sapnap to talk to. He knew the other would listen to him without complaint, and lend him a shoulder to lean on. But whenever George rambled to his friend, he almost felt like a whiny child being ungrateful for the life he had.

He was the chief's son, he had everything he needed. So why must he ask for more?

But... when he talked to *Dream*, it almost felt as if he could talk freely.

George could whine all he wanted to him, since Dream was a prince after all. Surely, he wouldn't judge George for wanting a little bit more in life, when he, as a *prince*, had *everything*.

*There was also the fact that Dream was a statue*, his mind supplied helpfully, and George chastised himself for wasting more of his thoughts on an inanimate, feelingless object.

*Dream can wait*, he thought to himself. *Right now, he needed to get a move on making Sapnap's gift.*

George rolled out of the bed and ducked underneath it to get the basket of shells... except...

The basket wasn't *there*.

"Huh?", George got up, and peered around his bed. "Where are they? I could've sworn..."

He trailed off, as he caught sight of the basket resting neatly on the wooden chair that he kept behind his door.

"...what?"

He recalled leaving the shells under his bed...

At least, he *thought* he left them under the bed...

George shrugged. It didn't matter anyway.

If his mother had happened to stumble by the basket, he surely would've gotten an earful, to say the least. But that didn't seem to be the case, so he padded over to the basket and gently moved it to the floor.

Then, he began by organizing the shells first, separating them into piles of scallops, zebra shells and conches.

George hoped that he would be finished with the dream-catcher before the end of the day.

He wanted to see Sapnap as soon as he could.

---

Sapnap wasn't expecting to be visited by his friend.

He *certainly* wasn't expecting to be visited by his friend's *mother* as well, and he *surely* wasn't expecting his life to be *threatened* by said mother. But he should've expected it, since George never thought about the consequences before he did something utterly *careless*.

*Oh, but George would most definitely think about the consequences now, Sapnap thought wearily. I pray to every deity out there that he wouldn't throttle me for getting him into this mess...*

Sapnap's day started like this.

His close friend Karl, visited him early in the morning, offering to keep him company and help around the farm. Sapnap accepted gratefully, and soon enough they were both done by noon, and with parting goodbyes, Karl left to attend to his little shop in the center of town.

That left Sapnap with enough time to pay a visit to his other friend, George, but to his pleasant surprise, he saw the other making his way towards him from the entrance of his farm.

"George?" he asked, a smile breaking out on his face, "Hi!"

"Hey, Sapnap.", George smiled, holding his hands behind his back, as if he were hiding something from view.

Sapnap let an amused smile creep onto his face.

“*Georgie...*”, he trailed teasingly. “What are you hiding from me?”

His friend giggled.

“Oh, I don’t know.”, George retorted. “Just... this.”

With that, his friend pulled out his hands from behind his back, and presented the *thing* he was hiding, almost bashfully.

Sapnap gasped.

...it was a dream-catcher...

...made of the *prettiest* shells Sapnap had *ever* seen.

“George...?”

The dream-catcher was made of woven thread, and a few sticks that merged to form a circle. The thread made up a delicate pattern on the inside, with a variety of shells intertwined in it.

Three strands of string fell from the bottom half of the dream catcher, the middle one being the longest. A few threads wove between those strings and had more shells hanging from them. Three of the largest, and the prettiest shells lined the end of each string, which balanced the dream-catcher’s picturesque form.

It was *beautiful*.

“*George...*”, Sapnap repeated. “What-”

“It’s for you.”, his friend cut in. “I know its not... *nearly* enough for what you did but... you mentioned having nightmares and I thought... well...”

George shoved the dream-catcher towards Sapnap, a faint blush creeping up from the side of his face.

“Here.”

“George I- *not enough*? George, this is *beautiful* and-”, Sapnap pulled the other into a tight hug, careful not to crush the dream-catcher between them. “*Thank you.*”



They both pulled away from the hug, and Sapnap held the dream-catcher in his hands, gazing at his friend with nothing but fondness.

“You went to the beach this time, I take it?”

George nodded, scratching the back of his head.

“Yeah, it... It felt amazing, Sapnap. You’ll never know how much- how much I...”

“I can get a feeling.”

“Yeah... You just... You helped me a lot, and I can never repay you for how much you’ve done-”

“George, *Georgie*. Being my friend is more than enough for me.”, Sapnap cut in. “You helped me enough times already. I was just repaying the favor.”

It was true, George *did* help him out a lot, although he doesn’t realize it.

Sapnap didn’t have many friends when he was younger. He was always ignored, avoided... He was only a farmer’s son, after all.

He only had his grandmother to talk to back at home, and even as he grew older, she started to talk in riddles, muttering about sorcerers and magic and a kingdom – Sapnap knew that her mind was slowly dying.

It took a toll on him, having no one to talk to. Everyone from the village knew about the state of his grandmother and called her crazy, and called him *weird* for having a guardian like her.

Sapnap was wary of the village kids, who always made fun of him, and when he met George, their relationship was more than rocky at the start.

They argued constantly, about the most meaningless things, and drove each other into the wall. It would’ve been believable, if Sapnap had said that he hated George back then, but in all honesty, it was more like having an annoying sibling.

The day he met George, was when he had fallen into a muddy puddle, courtesy of the village kids that ‘playfully’ shoved him.

He claimed that he fell by accident, that he didn’t need George’s help or pity, but they both knew the real truth, as George was hanging out by the very puddle that he was pushed into.

George was slightly taller than him back then, since he was older by one or two years, and he was

more irritating as well.

The boy had helped Sapnap from the puddle, and constantly nagged at him as he wiped away the mud from his eyes and mouth.

Sapnap had repeatedly hit the other's arms away, shouting that *he didn't need any help*, and to just *leave him alone!*

But much to young Sapnap's distaste, the other never left him alone after that, and constantly tailed him wherever he went, yelling at any kid who dared to insult Sapnap.

George always insulted him too, but it was more along the lines of 'you idiot' and 'moron', rather than '*freak*' or '*farm-boy*'.

George never brought up his status.

If it weren't for that day, *when George threatened a pompous girl that he would have his father throw her into the stocks if she ever messed with Sapnap again*, Sapnap never would've known that George was the *village chief's son*.

Then another argument broke out between them, with rough words like,

*"Why didn't you ever tell me? Did you hang out with me as a joke? Do I mean nothing to you?"* and words like,

*"I never told you because I didn't think it mattered! You idiot! **You mean everything to me!**"*

That was the day their friendship eventually took a turn for the better.

The day when their vocabulary went from insults to the raw truth, their conversations from arguments to late night talks, and when Sapnap's grandmother died, along with George's father, they only needed each other that much more.

*He couldn't have asked for a better friend*, Sapnap thought, as he watched George leave the farm with a final wave.

*"I had to get water from the lake"*, was what he said. *"It's the last of my chores."*

Sapnap smiled to himself.

George wouldn't have to work for his mother for long, Sapnap just had a feeling about it, *things will change*.

With that thought, he made his way into his house, and hung the pretty dream-catcher gently above his bed. Sapnap gazed at it for a long moment, and felt a cold shiver creep up from his arms.

Sapnap knew nightmares wouldn't go away as easily as that. It didn't mean he loved George's gift any less.

There was a knock on his door.

Sapnap turned around, leaving his bedroom, and made his way towards the entrance of his house, wondering who could be behind the door.

He opened it, paused, and *gulped*.

"Hello, *sweetie*, it's so nice to see you again."

*George's mother.*

"Um... uh, hi, ma'am--"

"Oh, please honey, call me Carol."

"Oh um, okay, uh--"

"I've just come to talk to you about my son, George.", she smiled, ever too sweetly, and Sapnap felt cold-sweat drip from his back.

"May I come in?"

"Oh, yes ma'am, sure."

"Oh, thank you honey, you're so kind."

Sapnap stepped aside, and let George's mother walk stiffly into his house. She had an off-look about her, as if she was cooking up a storm inside her mind and she was only hiding it for Sapnap's sake.

She looked especially threatening under the evening sun seeping through his window, and Sapnap felt himself shivering from her absent gaze.

*What could she want about George?*

His question was answered a moment later.

“I know that George is hiding something from me.”

Sapnap’s heart dropped.

He watched, stone cold, as his friend’s mother painted a serious look onto her face.

“He um. He wouldn’t- He wouldn’t hide anything from you ma’am.”

“Darling, *honey*, I know you’re only trying to protect your friend. So, I will patiently let this one slide. But you should know, I do not appreciate being lied to... So please, think of your next words carefully.”

Sapnap shuddered.

“George came home late a few days ago, when he was supposed to fetch water from the lake. He returned at night, with an excuse of hanging out with his friends when I specifically told him to be back by noon. Yesterday, he begged me to let him out of the house to fetch water, and he brought water back from that filthy village well, yet he took as long as it would’ve taken to make the journey to the lake and back.”

George’s mother, Carol, took a step closer.

Sapnap took a step back.

“Today, I woke up to find my son’s bed empty, and when I look under it, I see a pile of sea-shells collected inside a fisher-men’s basket.”

“Ma’am I-”

“Tell me, *sweetheart*, what am I supposed to assume from this?”

“It’s not what you think, ma’am, I swear-”

“Then what is it *honey*? You’re his closest friend, and I *know* that you very well know what he’s been *up* to.”

*George is going to die. George is going to die. George is going to-*

“Well?”

*He can’t do this. He can’t do this. What does he say?*

*What could he say?*

“I’m *waiting*.”

“He’s seeing someone.”

George’s mother took a step back.

“Excuse me?”

Sapnap felt sweat dripping from the back of his neck.

“He’s- he’s seeing... someone.”, Sapnap stuttered out. “The shells, he didn’t collect them. He uh- he told me he had a friend collect them for him. Um- he- he didn’t want to tell you where he was going because he was... *embarrassed*.”

Sapnap could only watch as a wide array of emotions filtered across Carol’s face.

“My son is... seeing someone?”

Sapnap vigorously nodded.

“He wanted to make a... bracelet out of the shells. As a gift.”

Then, Sapnap saw, with wonder, as Carol’s face slowly morphed into a definite emotion. It was an emotion that he would’ve never thought to see on her. An emotion that strayed *far, far away* from the description of George’s mother.

Pure, unfiltered *happiness*.

“My son has finally found a girl?”

Sapnap tried to fake a smile, but the raw terror from seeing George’s mother *smile*, only made him look like a terrified hyena.

“He’s finally learning to settle down! *Finally*, he’s letting go of that stupid dream of his, and he’ll stay in the village because my son has *finally* learned to commit!”

“...yes, ma’am, he has! He said he’ll never... leave her side?”

“Oh, that is such wonderful news, darling! Thank you so much for telling me this.”

“It’s okay ma’am. I wouldn’t want you to worry more about him.”

“Oh, I won’t honey, thanks to you... Do keep me updated though, I wish to learn more about my son’s... *interest*. Although, don’t tell him I visited you either. He wouldn’t have wanted me to know.”

“Okay ma’am. I’ll keep it a secret.”

“Thank you darling, I’ll be on my way then, do take care!”

With that, the dreaded *witch* was finally gone from his house, and Sapnap was left standing,

wondering, *what in merlin's name am I going to tell George?*

## A truth and a lie.

### Chapter Summary

a filler?

### Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

“... You told her *what*.”

George’s gaze was incredulous, with a hint of terror showing itself between the lines.

“It’s not like I had a choice!”, Sapnap pleaded, and winced at the utter disbelief that painted itself across his friend’s face.

“You had *every* choice, and you told her I’m seeing a *girl*?”

“Hey, don’t blame me when *you* were the one being a reckless idiot!”

“I wasn’t-”, George took a deep breath. “What *exactly* did she say to you?”

Sapnap paused, and scrunched his face in thought.

“She...”, he shook his head, “She was delighted, actually... In her words, you’ve finally learned the true meaning of *commitment*. She believes you’ll stay inside town for your supposed... significant other.”, he curled his mouth into a snide grin, “You know... like a *proper boy in love*.”

George looked visibly *repulsed* at that wording and Sapnap tried, in vain, to contain his snickers.

“Oh, this is funny to you is it?”

“What can I say, George? You’ve always had a problem with talking to girls and now you get to have one-”

Sapnap didn’t know George’s gaze could get even darker.

“Well, in case you haven’t noticed, Sapnap, there *isn’t* a bloody girl!”, George wiped a hand across his face in frustration, “What do I even say to *mother*?”

Sapnap paused at that. “Hey, look, it’s not like it’s an *entirely* bad situation...”

At George’s unimpressed look, Sapnap continued. “She told me she didn’t want you to know that she talked to me.”

George stared at him.

“*And?*”



“So, she won’t bother you about it at all! Besides, you can sneak more out of town now.”, Sapnap finished, with a mischievous grin.

At that, George snapped his gaze towards him.

“What- what do you mean by that?”

Sapnap tilted his head back, a confident smile drawn across his face.

“You can leave town all you want, Georgie, and *mother dearest* wouldn’t suspect a thing! She’d be too busy thinking that her son is sneaking out to be all lovey-dovey with his one true-”

“Alright, *stop*.”, George fought down the heat of embarrassment that was spreading across his face. “That...”, he shook his head, “I... *really* hope you’re right about this. I don’t know what I would do if mother found out and decided to- to-”, he took a deep breath. “I hope you’re right about this, Sapnap.”

The mood had clearly dimmed down, and all traces of mirth slipped away from the bandana-clad boy.

Sapnap shifted into a more serious stance, training a knowing gaze onto his friend, and George had to look away.

“Don’t worry, love.”, Sapnap turned away from the other, gazing to the left whilst George looked to the right. “I *know* it’ll be okay.”

They were still standing like that, the closest they could be to one another, yet their gazes locked so far away, when Sapnap broke the silence.

“You remember my promise, don’t you?”, he asked, and George felt an old memory wash over him.

He closed his eyes.

---

*“I don’t want to go Sapnap. I don’t-”*

*Sapnap held onto his friend tightly, while the other was desperately trying to keep the wetness of his eyes at bay.*

*“You won’t George. I won’t let you leave.”*

*“But that won’t matter Sapnap!”, a dry sob. “Mother said that if she caught me out of town one more time, she won’t ever let me inside again! I- I can’t- Sapnap I hate this place. I hate this place so much but I can’t leave you, I-”*

*“Hey, hey stop. Please, you’ll make me cry too.”*

*“I’m not crying.”, George said, and of all times, that had to be the moment the dam broke, his eyes*

*betraying him as the tears leaked down his face.*

*“George, hey, look at me.”*

*The shorter boy only shook his head, keeping his face buried in friend’s shoulder.*

*“Sapnap, I can’t-”*

*“George please... just look at me.”*

*George took a shuddering breath, embarrassment creeping into every part of him that wasn’t filled with fear. He slowly leaned away from Sapnap, his childhood friend, the one he would call family, the one he would call a brother, someone who he knew wouldn’t judge him, no matter what.*

*George looked up at Sapnap.*

*A wary smile greeted him.*

*“We’ve been quite... honest... with each other lately, wouldn’t you say?”, Sapnap mused, and George let out a half-hearted laugh.*

*“I guess we have...”*

*“So... you’ll understand how honest I’m being when I say this.”, Sapnap shifted in place, and looked straight into George’s eyes, his gaze unwavering.*

*“I promise...”, Sapnap paused, steadily, taking in a slow breath. “**I promise you, that I will always** be by your side, no matter what. If your mother banishes you, let her. Let her see how family is meant to treat each other because George, I’ll follow you in a heartbeat, I’ll take care of you, unlike her, and... and I don’t know about you George, but you’ve been the most closest friend to me, you acted like my brother even from the start and-”, Sapnap wiped his face, ridding of the few tears that leaked from his eyes. “It’s your mother’s fault for not seeing you for you George... and if she wants to let you go, let her. She doesn’t deserve you anyways.”*

*“Sapnap-”, the name was choked out, an overwhelming feeling creeping around the shorter boy.*

*“Sapnap, you-”*

*“I’m not lying to you, George, I promise-”, There was a light in Sapnap’s eyes, and George felt his breath leave him at the sight.*

*“I promise, we’ll always be together George. No matter what. I’ll follow you wherever you wish to go, even if it’d lead me to my own grave, I’ll still follow you.”*

*“Sapnap, you can’t-”*

*“I can, and I will.”, Sapnap grinned. “You have my word on that.”*

---

George snapped away from his thoughts, and turned back towards Sapnap. He startled at the sight of the other, already looking at him, with a familiar glint in his eyes.

It was the same smile Sapnap wore that day, the same one as he made that promise. *That promise-*

“You remember, then?”, Sapnap cut in, carefully.

George gave him a shaky smile, ducking his head down, he let out a huff.

*“Of course, I do.”*

---

*Deep into the forest...*

*A stray thought, a passing muse...*

*"Maybe the shell is pretty..."*

*"Then again, so was he..."*

*"What am I thinking?"*

#### Chapter End Notes

it's been a while since I've updated, and that's because I was a bit stuck on the plot. I've got it figured out now so dw, I'll update more often from now--  
and I'm sorry for not updating sooner, and not updating with a longer chapter, but the chapter after needs to be one of its own and you'll see why!!

anyway, take care-- I appreciate you a whole lot <3

## Yearn for a friend.

### Chapter Summary

George has a vague feeling.

George's mother was staring at her son.

She was hunched over her usual stack of parchments, but her sight was solely fixated on George, and he didn't know what to think of it.

Her narrow eyes were peering over her round glasses, pinning him down with a sharp gaze, and George tried not to burst into tears right then and there.

It was the most attention he has ever gotten from his dear old mother, and he was *terrified*.

George cleared his throat.

"Mother...", he flinched at the break of his voice, and he spotted the barest hint of a smile forming on his mother's face.

He shivered at the sight.

"Mother, can I...?", he trailed off again, debating on whether he should just stay home and finish all his usual chores.

"...Yes, my dear?", his mother pushed, the words coated with a colossal amount of honey that would make even Tubbo's bees envious.

George decided to try again.

"Mother, may I fetch water from the lake? I promise I will be back by-"

"Of course, you can, son.", the smile on her face was utterly blinding, and George cursed Sapnap for being right. He was always right.

"You can take as much time as you need. I'm in... quite a pleasant mood today, so I'll be lenient just this once."

George gulped.

"That's... That's nice of you mother, thank you."

"Of course, son...", she smiled at him, gently, and George felt like he wanted to cry again, this time for a different reason.

"...and go along now, honey. We wouldn't want you to keep your 'lake' waiting, now would we?", his mother continued, and George couldn't stop the redness that crawled up his face.

Sapnap may be right about his mother, not knowing better about George's *real* whereabouts. But that didn't mean George couldn't despise every moment of it.

*Why, Sapnap? Why, of all things, did you say it was a 'girl'?*

He couldn't decide whether he should hug Sapnap, or whack him upside the head with a broomstick, for the utter storm of emotions he was currently going through.

George figured he'd come up with an answer, once he finished his supposed 'trip to the lake'.

---

George left home with a total of three buckets, a pair of shears and a strip of cloth in his hands. Two of the filled pails of water already sat by the village lake, and the one he was carrying was headed to a clearing he knew all too well.

It was about high time that Dream escaped the foliage of vines and moss that was keeping him imprisoned.

George scoffed.

The man tried to defeat an apparently powerful wizard and now he couldn't even escape the few vines that were curled around him – how pathetic.

*He is a statue after all, I can't blame him,* George wondered aimlessly, as he kicked a stray pebble that crossed his path, *the fact that he had the courage to even challenge the warlock himself was...*

George paused at the word that came to mind.

He wasn't- Dream *wasn't*-

George shook away from his thoughts.

He didn't think Dream was... *that word*. He didn't think Dream was even that *likeable*...

*...then what am I doing right now?*

George sighed.

He was only helping Dream out because he had an obligation to.

*What obligation?*

An obligation that Dream was a Prince. A Prince who got cursed by an evil warlock that needed

helping.

*So why are you helping him **alone**?*

George paused.

Why *was* he helping him alone?

George didn't know how to break the curse, sure, but he *did* know about the rumors that *true love* could break it.

In that case, he most *definitely* couldn't help Dream on his own.

That, was an undeniable truth...

*So why was he still visiting Dream?*

There was a thought, always in the back of George's mind, that Dream would wake up one day. He didn't ever question as to *how* that would happen, just that, he *would* wake up, and George would gain a friend out of it. A close friend.

It was only now, that it dawned on George, that Dream was a statue. He was a statue who hadn't moved in fifty years, and wouldn't suddenly startle awake, solely because George wanted him to.

The boy slowed his walk down into a stop.

He was standing in front of the cliff now – the very cliff that dropped into the home of his supposed friend.

*Should he stop visiting Dream?*

George's face scrunched up.

*Should he go back into town, and find someone who could be the true love Dream was looking for?*

He dropped his gaze.

*True love doesn't exist.*

He frowned.

*True love couldn't exist.*

He thought back to the time when Dream was once visited by his swarm of admirers. George had heard that, half a century ago, the Stone Prince had company every day of the week. There even used to be a festival about it, where on each full moon, every maiden of Raymore brought a flower to the Stone Prince, laid it in front of him, and confessed their love in hopes that the Prince would soon wake again.

George knew that it was an absurd tradition, but he could've hoped, at least one of those girls could've gotten to know Dream like he did...

Visiting him each day, talking to him, pretending to hold a conversation with a statue that felt too *alive*...

Maybe then, there could've been a chance of Dream waking up.

Maybe then, George could finally get a chance to meet Dream for real, and see if his personality matched the one, he had in his mind.

Someone who was cocky, but had the courage to be.

Someone who was indignant, but had every right to be.

Someone who was impulsive, but had the heart for it.

Someone... who George admired, someone George *wanted* to meet, someone who fell into his life, too easily, too seamlessly... for a statue, non the less.

Someone who George-

He couldn't find a word to describe it.

Instead, he looked down past the cliff, a yearning gaze covering every inch of his expression.

*True love could never exist.*

*Love is meant to be grown from something.*

*Whether it was an attraction sensed, or a dream shared, there must be something for love to latch onto first – only then, will you be able to sense the feeling of it.*



*Like a vine, it's meant to sprout up from the ground, curling around you from heel to head until you suddenly realize it's a part of you.*

George walked forward, gently sliding down into the clearing.

*You won't be able to rid of the vines so easily, and when you try to wash them away, the water you spill would only seep into the ground, making way for the grass to grow, and then...*

The familiar sight of Dream greeted him, kneeling on the forest floor, an arm laid out onto the grass and the other bent over his knee.

*Then... from the grass, you'll grow flowers.*

*From the flowers you'll grow trees, and the trees...*

George smiled.

*The trees are the worst part, they'll travel across the plains you call your heart, and engulf it in a sea of foliage and suddenly, you'll realize that you're stuck in a forest.*

He decided he'll think of finding a way to break Dream's curse when the time comes, whenever that would be. He didn't need to worry about it right now.

*You're stuck in a forest, with nowhere to turn to, nowhere to hide.*

Right now, he needed to...

*You'd be too caught up in the beauty of it though, to ever ponder the idea of finding your way back to your home-town again.*

He needed to...

*The forest feels more of a home to you anyway...*

He needed to *wash away those vines...*

## A sip of heaven.

### Chapter Summary

A strange voice?

### Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

“Alright, Dream.”, George quipped, an easy expression painted on his face. “I don’t know whether you want this long-awaited bath or not, and there’s no way for you to tell me.”

The boy had a heavy bucket placed onto the ground; a woolen cloth draped over it.

“But I have a simple solution for you.”, George continued, as he started to use the shears to trim away the pretty vines that curled around Dream.

One by one, the vines fell onto the grass, painting a neat flare around the statue. Their roots, however, were still plowed deeply into the ground. George couldn’t have pulled them out, even if he had tried to.

They were stuck-fast into the soil...

“Blink once if you want me to bathe you, and blink twice if you don’t.”, he quipped, and leaned over to pick up the dry cloth.

He dampened it with the water.

As he straightened up, he leveled his gaze onto Dream, pretending to wait for a reply.

“Any time now...”, he drawled, and he swore he could feel Dream rolling his eyes behind that mask of his.

“Oh wait, I *almost* forgot.”, George gasped dramatically as he held a hand to his face. “I can’t tell whether you blinked or not with that oh so *attractive thing* you always hide behind.”

He rung the cloth out, letting a few drops of water hit the ground gently.

The drops slowly flowed across the vines and cascaded down their leaves. One by one, they seeped into the ground, where the roots slept.

“Well, I’ll just have to assume you’d want this bath... What, with fifty years without one?”

The boy almost expected Dream to make a quip back at him.

He sighed, when there wasn't an answer.

*Dream's not real*, George reminded himself. *The curse, if there even is one, isn't broken yet.*

*It might never be broken...*

George shifted as he tried to will that miserable thought into a corner of his mind.

He didn't want to think about the curse.

He didn't want to think about the fact that Dream was a statue.

He didn't want to think about the fact that, the only person he spilled most of his secrets to, had the highest chance to never wake up again.

George's face scrunched up.

"I *hope* you'll never wake up... You... You...", George sighed. He pinched his eyebrows in frustration.

Why was he still dwelling on the matter?

Hadn't he decided that he wouldn't worry about breaking the supposed curse anymore?

"You... You might smell even worse than a bog... If you ever wake up...", he paused. "You'd probably look like one too."

...it was the only sentence he could think of.

"... Let's take care of that shall we?", George hastily continued, and took the moment to step closer to Dream, debating on how he was meant to start cleaning the dirt off the statue.

*Should he start with the mask first?*

Nodding to himself, George braced a hand on Dream's mossed covered shoulder, and leaned in casually with the wet cloth...

Except...

Except, he hadn't thought out how *slippery* the moss would be.

For a moment, George felt his hand flare up with a thousand sparks, as it alarmingly slipped away from Dream's shoulder. After that, he felt himself tripping forward, as he tried in desperation to correct his balance.

Only, his foot caught onto a curled vine that was firmly rooted to the ground.

"Oh no.", were the only words that left his mouth, as he all but positively crashed into Dream, falling gracelessly across the poor statue.

George groaned.

"Why...", he looked up, and stopped, short of breath.

Dream looked...

He looked...

...he looked *preposterous*.

George didn't know the mask would look even more ridiculous up close.

The boy brought a hand to his mouth, as a snort drew out from his lips. He tried, in vain, to stifle the hysteric giggles that escaped him.

He didn't know why he was laughing, but something about that mask, the creepy smile, looming mere inches away from his face, was sending him over the edge.

George drew in a sharp breath.

"Oh my gosh, you look so-"

His words got cut off, as another voice, unfamiliar to his own spoke inside of his mind.

"*Cute.*"

George sputtered.

“What-”, he scrambled back, shifting himself away from Dream.

*Where had that thought come from?*

“What-”, he repeated, as he squinted his eyes at the statue, as if it was responsible for the strange voice he heard.

“What was *that*?”

A few moments passed in silence, as George stared at the statue in confusion.

*‘Cute’*

George certainly wasn’t responsible for that passing thought. If anything, he would’ve gone for a different word to describe Dream.

*Stupid, ridiculous, un-attractive and **un-cute***, being some of the few.

Shaking his head, George got up to his feet, and picked up the wet cloth from where he had dropped it earlier.

He squinted his eyes at Dream.

“What *was* that?”

There was no answer.

Had he finally gone insane? Did he finally lose his mind over the days he spent talking to a stone statue?

The boy stepped closer, reaching his hand out towards Dream.

He splayed his fingers over the mask and took in a deep breath.

*What am I doing?*

George shook away his thoughts as he focused on the one thing in front of him.

“Dream? Was... Was that you?”

A moment passed...

Then another...

...there was no answer.

“Dream?”

George waited in silence, turning his gaze over to the grass below him.

“Dream, if you can hear me, please say something...”

He waited.

The forest remained silent.

George gave up.

With a defeated sigh, he dropped the wet cloth onto the bucket and took his hand away from Dream. He wondered why he thought that would work...

“...What was I *thinking*? ... Of course, you wouldn’t talk.”

George turned around and faced the shrubs of the forest – the path back to town. He didn’t feel like staying in the clearing anymore...

All he wanted...

All he *needed* was Dream to wake up. The anticipation was killing him inside, and he *needed* to know whether he would ever get to talk to Dream – someone, who at this point, knew him from the inside out.

George wanted to know everything about Dream too.

He wanted to hear his side of the story. Was he *really* as arrogant as the tales claimed him to be? Was he allowed to roam the earth as George oh so desperately wanted to? Or was he confined to

his castle walls? Locked inside the same way George was – forced to learn the mannerisms of a responsible prince?

He shuddered.

The conclusion was still the same as ever.

George couldn't break the curse; it was almost impossible. Dream was doomed to sleep until someone supposedly fell in love with him, and George certainly *couldn't do that*.

For fifty years, Dream was visited by hundreds of admirers, and yet the curse still wasn't broken.

How could George think that Dream would suddenly wake up again?

He drew out a long breath, pushing away the gloomy thoughts aside, and went to take a step back home...

Only, his foot pressed onto something solid, amidst the soft grass.

He lifted his leg.

A blue shell was laying innocently, on the ground.

George scoffed.

Bending down, he picked up the offending object, and turned back over to Dream.

"If this was a flower, it would've withered away long ago.", George started. "Be grateful it's made of the same stuff as you. It'll be here for a long, *long* time."

His expression dropped, gazing at Dream sadly.  
"A pity isn't it?"

He dropped the shell in front of Dream and backed away slowly.



“Tell me Dream, will you ever break your curse?”

He paused.

“If... If you don’t... If you don’t break it... while I’m still here, I hope I’ll get to meet you in another life.”

He turned away.

“Till tomorrow then, Dream.”, he drawled, and, as he was walking away from the clearing, back to his town...

He could’ve sworn...

He could’ve sworn he heard that voice again, desperately calling out to him.

*‘You never told me your name.’*

## Chapter End Notes

I would like to say, thank you so much for staying with the story, even through my horrible, non-existent update schedule.

I wish I could update more often, but my finals are coming up, and I'm getting swarmed by school work, so I can't be on my laptop as much.

But one thing I can assure you is that I'll finish this story, no matter what. It's made me so, so happy from the start so just, thank you for reading it, and being there for it. and thank you for understanding as well <3 <3 <3 stay safe <3

## In nightmares, he delves.

### Chapter Summary

Sapnap's roller-coaster of emotions.

### Chapter Notes

WARNING : This chapter has a brief, non graphic description of violence (its not that much, just suggested). But please don't read it if it troubles you.

If you want, you can skip to the first line-break in the chapter, and it'll still make sense.

Dark, thick clouds surrounded him.

They were suffocating, and the bandana-clad boy tried not to breathe in the harsh air. He coughed once, twice, and looked up blearily.

An abandoned town greeted him, with the sky as grey as smoke, and the shrubbery reduced to bare twigs and tumbleweeds. The ground was dried up, cracking in rough, uneven shards. But the atmosphere was cold – cold as *ice*.

The boy shivered.

There were soldiers – tall, and *threatening*.

They were dressed in pitch black armor, and their eyes were glowing through the gaps of their helmets. Dark, navy cloaks flowed from their shoulders as they moved around the dreary town.

They strangely reminded him of the blind sorcerer – the one from his nightmares.

*Was this another nightmare?*

*It feels like one...*

The boy coughed again.

There weren't any townsfolk around – the doors of the ratted down houses were bolted shut, as if the residents inside were hiding from something.

The boy stayed rooted in his spot, between the guards who were patrolling the tight road.

To the left of him, behind the rotten, trivial houses, there was a scream – a desperate woman crying out.

Her voice was shrill, and the way she screamed made the boy flinch. He wanted to hide himself, but something was stopping him from moving.

Out of nowhere, there was a loud '*CRACK*' – unmistakably the sound of a whip.

He heard the petrifying wail of a child.

The woman screamed louder.

To the right, he heard an old man. He was weeping inconsolably.

The weeping turned into pleas of 'Stop, it *hurts*, please *it hurts!* I didn't mean to steal the bread! Please! I won't do it again! *It hurts! Stop!*'

Then the pleading turned to screams.

Screams that matched the woman, screams that matched the child.

The boy blocked his ears.

His eyes fell onto the ground, where an old woven doll lay innocently. Its button eyes were staring

at him, the stitched smile fraying at the edges.

A faint trail of dried blood seeped into the doll's white dress. He would've thought it was only a pretty pattern, solely meant to decorate the doll, but the boy knew better, as he trained his eyes around the dreadful town.

He felt sick at the sight.

*What was this?*

*Why was he here again?*

***“My dear prince, your kingdom is in ruins.”***

The boy recoiled at the familiar, booming voice.

***“Your people are losing hope, the descendants of your most loyal knights are now mine to control; you have no power here.”***

He whimpered.

There was a flash, and the boy was forced to take a step back. He coughed, sniffled, and winced at the thick smoke that was now blanketing the area.

The smoke shifted.

The blind sorcerer was there again.

*His soulless eyes. His billowing dark cloak.*

The boy felt the pinpricks of terror, steadily crawl up his veins.

“*Please...*”, he begged. “*Stop.*”

---

Sapnap woke up in cold sweat.

Harsh puffs of air left his lips, and his eyes darted frantically around the shadowy room. The dream-catcher above his bed was staring at him, innocently, *mockingly* – Sapnap felt unreasonably betrayed at the sight of it.

He placed a hand above his heart, and desperately tried to level his uneven breathing. His face was damp with hot tears and his mouth was as dry as a desert.

The boy’s gaze caught the window. It was still dark out, most likely a candle or two before dawn.

He leapt out of the bed.

The boy hummed a slow tune to himself, as he rushed to change into his outside clothing. His house felt too dark. There were too many shadows.  
It was too *quiet*.

He hummed louder.

With a final slam of his door, Sapnap made a path towards the lake.

The town was under curfew, so he had to be discreet. A farm-boy like him didn't have a reason to be out so early.

Using the path that was made for his friend was the only way out of town at the moment.

He just needed a breath of fresh air.

---

Sapnap was leaning on the town wall.

One hand rested on the rough stone, while the other pulled at his hair. His calves were damp with lake-water, and his slacks were rolled up considerably. The boy felt the bite of cold air nip at his feet, and he flinched at the harsh reminder of his nightmare.

He took a steady breath.

The nightmares weren't normal, he knew that undeniably.

It was one thing to have recurring dreams, but it was another to have a story made of them, a sick and *twisted* story, revolving around the same person- the same place, the same *rotting town*.

*Why was he getting these nightmares?*

Sapnap's thoughts were cut off, as a passing shadow caught his line of sight.

He whipped his gaze up, squinting into the dense forest.

A bush rustled.

He waited with baited breath.

At a considerable distance from Sapnap, a figure emerged through the thicket of leaves.

Sapnap's eyes widened.

*Was that...*

*Was that George?*

*No... It seemed too tall to be George...*

The figure seemed to be wearing a cloak, drifting through the trees, as it made its way further into the thick foliage. Sapnap felt curiosity peak through him, as he tried to ponder what the cloaked person would want – in an eerie forest nonetheless.

The sun hadn't even risen, so the forest looked as dark and menacing as ever.

Sapnap followed without a second thought, his nightmare concealed at the back of his mind.

He wanted to call out to the figure, to test whether it really was his close friend or not, but a part of him adamantly decided against it.

He didn't know why, but a feeling told him that it would be a bad idea to alert his presence to the figure.

He followed silently.

---

The cloak led him through a weaving path - through vines that posed as silhouettes of snakes, and shrubs that resembled a snoozing pack of wolves.

Sapnap tried not to let the surroundings get to him.

The figure suddenly took a sharp turn, and disappeared into the forest, and Sapnap scrambled to catch up.

He didn't want to be left alone in a chilling forest, where he had all the chance in the world to actually come across snakes or a pack of wolves. George certainly came across the latter, but Sapnap didn't want to test the theory that he could be faster than his friend.

He was just about to call out to the rapidly-disappearing figure, despite every inch of his body telling him not to, when he skidded to a stop right in front of a small cliff.

This was where the figure took a sharp turn.

Against his better judgement, Sapnap crouched behind a bush and peered curiously into the cliff. It was a steady slope, with reasonable height, but the path was blocked with a thicket of bushes and shrubs. At the bottom, there was a clearing, surrounded by the trees of the forest.



In the middle of it, there was a lump of rock, with a cluster of vines snaking around the ground. Shifting his gaze slightly to the side, there was a filled pail of water resting innocently, with an old cloth draped over it.

He wondered where that had come from.

Sapnap looked around for a path down into the clearing, and he caught sight of a steady trail of broken bushes, which were matted down with use. He looked to the side of him to see a few vines that were quite loose, but were thick enough to be used as a stabilizing rope. He realized that this was the path down the cliff, but... he wondered why the cloaked figure didn't take it.

His questions were answered when the figure appeared through the dense forest, from the other side of the clearing.

*Ah, so there must be an easier path then,* he thought, and quietened his breathing to observe what the figure would do next.

He felt a thrill of adrenaline, peaking from his nightmare that morning, paired along with following a mysterious figure through the dark forest. It felt as if he was doing something... *brave*, and he quite enjoyed the feeling of it.

His supposed braveness started depleting when a scratchy, undoubtedly male voice, spoke into the clearing.

"My sincere greetings to you, old friend..."

*Old friend?*

*Was the figure speaking to him?*

Sapnap hid more behind the bushes, and prayed to every deity out there, that the figure didn't see him, and was only speaking to himself as a means of self-amusement.

His prayers were answered when the figure started circling the rock, continuing the one-sided conversation.

*Okay... So he was speaking to the rock...*

*Was it even a rock?*

Sapnap crept out of the bushes, a sense of safety creeping over him. He squinted his eyes as best as he could to see the rock better and gasped at the sight.

It wasn't a rock at all.

It was a statue – a stone statue.

*...that resembled the likes of a prince.*

With a start, Sapnap realized what he was looking at.

“The Stone Prince...”, he whispered to himself, and leaned more into the clearing.

The prince was kneeling on the ground, and was covered in a small layer of moss. He had a cloak on his shoulders, that draped itself over his body, and flowed gently onto the grass. The guy was also wearing... a strange mask – Sapnap could make out a smiley-face carved onto it.

An old memory crept into his head.

*“Tell me, have you seen what his face looks like? I swear to every deity I can name, that curse isn't ever going to break.”*

*Sapnap gave his friend an amused look.*

*“You sure do hate the guy a lot.”*

*George huffed.*

*“Yeah... I guess I do...”*

“So that's what Georgie was on about...”, Sapnap drawled to himself quietly. “This has *got* to be

the Stone Prince himself...”

A gravelly voice shook him away from his thoughts.

“The boy cleaned you up, did he?”, the figure rasped, and kicked over the resting bucket of water, which was quite needless if Sapnap had a say for it.

The water spilled onto the ground, which he realized, was covered in thick vines that were unnaturally cut off by something sharp.

*George...?*

*...what?*

George never told him that he visited the forest again.

*Didn't he get chased by a pack of wolves last time?*

Sapnap scratched his head.

*He visited again to clean up the statue?*

He didn't know why his friend would go out of his way to clean up *a random* statue in the middle of a forest. George didn't even like those old swooning legends, *he didn't even like the statue itself*, so why was he helping out this supposed Stone Prince?

Sapnap couldn't figure it out.

*...just how many times did he visit this clearing?*

He shook his head in dismissal, and looked over to the cloaked-figure again.

*He'll ask George about it later...*

The figure sneered darkly.

Sapnap gulped.

A rough hand reached down to pick up something laying hidden in the thick grass.

The figure held it up, and the faint moonlight caught onto it.

It resembled a blue seashell.

A pretty one at that....

*...did George leave it there?*

Sapnap didn't know his friend could become more puzzling.

He could disregard the fact that George casually cleaned up a piece of rock, but what he couldn't wrap his head around, was *why in the world* would George go out of his way to gift *a beautiful shell* to *said piece of rock*.

The figure threw away the shell carelessly, and Sapnap bristled.

*Hey watch it, that's my friend's tiny piece of rock that he wanted to gift the much larger piece of rock, you're throwing there.*

His thoughts were rudely interrupted as the figure spoke again.

"He's getting closer and closer to breaking the curse."

Sapnap paused.

The... curse?

*Hang on...*

*Was the curse real?*

*The figure... was it the witch - or rather, the wizard, that made the curse?*

Sapnap thought the curse was only a *hoax*, an old wives' tale – a legend created by the lonely maidens of the old Raymore...

He didn't know it could be... *real*. He couldn't wrap his head around it.

*Magic couldn't be real... could it?*

Another stray thought crept into his mind.

*...George is breaking the curse?*

There was a silent pause.

*George is a wizard...?*

He pondered at the statement.

George couldn't possibly be a wizard...

Why would he be terrified of his own mother, if he was undoubtedly a wizard, who supposedly had enough power to break the statue's curse?

He could just... evaporate her.

*But if he isn't a wizard, then how is he breaking the curse?*

*What, is he following that stupid old legend?*

*The one where, in order to break the curse, you have to fall in-*

Sapnap's eyes widened in realization.

*No way...*

“He's in...! *George is falling in...?*”.

He stuttered.

The boy didn't have time to delve in the new revelation, as the cloaked-figure went to lower his hood.

The supposed wizard slowly turned his back towards the statue, looking at the luscious ground.

The figure shifted his head.

Sapnap tried not to scream at the sight.

*Glowing white eyes, short brown hair.*

*The billowing dark cloak...*

*How could he have not noticed it sooner?*

He had faced the same dreaded figure in his nightmares, *for each and every winter since his*

*grandmother died.*

It wasn't a witch.

*It was the blind sorcerer.*

“Don't get your hopes up, *Prince Clay*. I may not be able interfere with the boy's life whilst the curse is breaking...”, the terrifying figure stepped closer to the statue. “But... that does not mean I can't stop him from finishing the job.”

Blind, glowing eyes whipped directly up at Sapnap, and he couldn't force down the shriek that escaped him.

The boy scrambled back carelessly, away from the cliff's edge, and stumbled to his feet.

With cold-dreaded fear creeping into every inch of his body, Sapnap ran back through the forest, uncaring of the vines that brushed across his face, uncaring of every soft bush at his feet, uncaring of the faint growls he could hear in the distance.

His biggest fear was right behind him anyway.

Sapnap ran back to town without so much of a second thought.

# Unravel the seam.

## Chapter Summary

the threads of friendship.

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Dawn was breaking over the sky, when George decided that it was time to visit Dream again. He had thrown out the usual excuse to his mother, that he wanted to fetch water from the village lake, and she had bought it without so much of an ounce of hesitance.

He didn't even take the buckets with him.

It was safe to say, George was enjoying the new shift they had. He could do whatever he wanted to, and his mother would be supportive of it – if not indirectly. She didn't have a clue as to what *exactly* he was doing when he was supposedly meeting up with this 'girl', but she was kind about it regardless– and George felt a pathetic sort of giddiness from it.

He felt as if his mother was finally proud of him – that she *cared* about him...

*But what will you tell her, when she finds out?*

George paused.

*She won't find out...*

He hadn't felt this happy in years – getting to leave town, exploring the world, having an adventure, feeling that his life was *worth it*...



She won't find out, and he'll make sure of it. He couldn't bear to lose everything he had.

He couldn't bear to lose-

*Dream...*

George still would've been happy without ever meeting the Stone Prince, that was an undoubted fact. But he would be lying if he said that he could imagine himself being the same person without him.

It's been a while, since he met Dream, and though he was just a statue, George felt an indescribable connection towards him.

He remembered their one-sided conversations, remembered the *longing*.

He never talked to anyone, the way he had talked to Dream.

*If only he wasn't the Stone Prince...*

He paused.

*If only he would wake up...*

His mind felt empty, after that thought.

*He won't wake up.*

George shook his head.

*Focus back on the path. You're going to see him. Doesn't matter if he's just a statue, just please...*

*Please stop thinking about that.*

He hummed a tune, an old song that Sapnap had taught him, passed down from his grandmother. The beat was steady, and the rhythm moved like a pendulum.

He remembered hearing the song for the first time, when Sapnap was mindlessly singing it as he was working on the farm.

The starting words drew him in so much, that he demanded his friend to sing him the rest of the song, and it soon grew into one of the most favorite melodies George had ever heard.

All traces of Dream started to fade from his mind, as the song crawled its way into his head.

---

George had just arrived at the lake, still humming the tune to himself, when his eyes caught sight of something peculiar at the wall.

More specifically, it was none other than Sapnap, stumbling his way through the hole on the other side.

The humming stopped.

“Sap... nap?”, George stuttered incredulously, as the other boy frantically rushed over him. The boy’s paces were strong yet unstable, and George tried not to flinch at how his friend’s slacks were thoroughly getting soaked.

All traces of bewilderment washed away from George, as he took note of the hysterical state his friend was in, the emotion soon being replaced by unbridled worry.

-

“Sapnap...?”

The bandana-clad boy, all but crashed into the other’s arms, when he arrived at the shore.

“Sapnap! What- Are you *okay*?”

Sapnap didn’t reply, instead choosing to bury his face into George’s shoulder.

“Sapnap...?”

His friend *sobbed*.

“*Please.*”

George didn’t think twice before winding his arms around the other. He had never seen his friend look this shaken, *ever*.

Sapnap was strong.

He endured so much trouble from the village when he was young, and he knew just how to hide said troubles from George.

If Sapnap felt an emotion, that translated to fear, the boy would do everything in his power to hide it from the rest of the world.

Sapnap *hated* feeling scared.

So, watching Sapnap wear the most terrified emotion George had ever seen on him, proceeding to hold onto George for dear life, made every inch of his body scream at him to protect the younger boy.

“Please George, you *can’t*. ”

Sapnap’s breath hitched. He pulled George tighter around him and clutched desperately onto his shirt.

“You can’t-”

“Sapnap, *hey*. It’s... It’s okay. Please don’t cry. What’s wrong?”

“I’m not crying!”, his friend cried, and moved away from George as to prove his point.

Sapnap’s eyes were glazed over, and a frown was etched into his face. But no traces of tears were present and George felt himself relieved at the sight of it, if not by a small amount.

“I’m not... Just- *George*. You can’t...”

Sapnap’s face crumpled.

George looked at him in concern.

“You- George, you can’t...”

George decided to help him.

“I... I can’t what, Sapnap?”, he asked quietly.

Nothing but silence grasped the air around them.

“Sapnap...?”

The bandana-clad boy took a long breath, as if he was steeling himself before saying whatever it was that he wanted to say.

He closed his eyes.

“George...”, he paused.

With baited breath, Sapnap drew out the next words carefully.

“You can’t leave town.”

For a while, the words didn't settle in George's head.

When they did, the boy took a step back.

"...what?", he whispered.

Sapnap flinched, as if the other had yelled out the sole word.

"George, I love you. You know I love you. But *I can't let you leave town.*"

George couldn't figure out if Sapnap was joking.

He threw that thought away as soon as it had come; Sapnap would *never* joke about something like this, no matter what.

"I'm being serious, George.", his friend added, securing his thought. "You can't... You can't go-"

"Sapnap just-", George scrunched his eyes closed. "Just, tell me what's going on. What *happened?*"

Sapnap paused for a moment, looking as if he were debating on just what to say to George.

"There... There was a sorcerer... in the clearing.", his eyes darted around the place. "He... he said he was going to *hurt* you."

"...what?"

Sapnap groaned in frustration.

"Look, George, I'm not lying. He was really there, and- and, I *saw* him before. I saw him in my nightmares."

"Your nightmares?"

“Yes, George. He was the blind sorcerer and-”

“Sapnap you can’t-”, George shook his head. “It might’ve not been-”

Sapnap’s gaze darkened, and George cut himself off.

“Don’t tell me it wasn’t real. The sorcerer was *there*, and he said that he was going to *do something to you!*”, he growled out the sentence. “I can’t let you go back to the Stone Prince!”

George’s focus sharpened at those words.

“Dre- The Stone Prince?”

“Yes, George, *the Stone Prince.*”

“What does *he* have to do with anything!”

“*He has to do everything with it!*”

“Sapnap, you’re not making any sense!”

“I don’t care, just listen to me, you *idiot!*”

George felt like he was a little kid again, arguing with Sapnap about whether Apples or Oranges were the better fruit.

“Sapnap, just... I can’t stay in town. I-”, George scrambled for a sentence. “I know I’ll be fine. I won’t be hurt. Besides you said yourself that you can easily take down the blind sorcerer right? Who’s to say I can’t too?”

“He’s not *blind*, George, he-”, Sapnap paused. “He’s powerful.”

“Sapnap, I-”

“Look, I know you love the outside world, but is it really that hard to just stay in town?”

He bristled.

“No- I- I mean... I-”, George stuttered, clawing for a response, as the question winded around him.

Sapnap looked regretful of the words, but he only stayed silent.

George didn’t know what to think.

He knew Sapnap. He knew the other was telling the truth, from his point of view, but could George believe that there was a sorcerer out there? The same sorcerer that was in Sapnap’s nightmares, who was supposedly going to hurt George too?

He knew the other was just trying to protect him... from a... a sorcerer but...

“George... I love you.”

George took a step back.

“But, you can’t leave town.”

He felt his head start to hurt.

“I won’t let you.”

“...you can’t stop me from leaving, Sapnap.”, the words were quiet. “You know just how much I can’t bear staying inside...”

“You explored all you wanted to, right? Surely having a month to yourself was enough for you.”

George’s eyes widened at the words.

*Enough?*

He chose to ignore the bitter feeling creeping up on him, and paved way for the indignance that came with it.

“You can’t stop me from leaving, just because of a bloody misunderstanding!”, George snapped.

“*Misunderstanding?* What misunderstanding? I saw what I saw, and I heard what I heard! It’s not my fault you’re being too much of a selfish idiot to listen!”

“I’m the one being selfish? You’re trying to stop me from doing the one thing I love, just because you got scared of nothing!”

Sapnap staggered back. His gaze darkened.

“I’m not scared, George... and it’s not ‘nothing’, either!”

Sapnap’s fists were clenched, and he took deep shuddering breaths as he locked eyes with his friend.

“If you leave town... I will...”

“You will what?”

Their gazes didn’t waver.

“I will tell your mother.”



George's breath hitched.

"...*what?*"

The air darkened considerably.

Sapnap took in a wavering breath.

"Don't think I wouldn't, George. If you leave, you'll get hurt, and I swear to every deity out there, I'll *die* before I let that happen."

Silence hung heavy around them, as George tried to compose himself.

He had to leave town. He had to see Dream. He couldn't be stuck inside *again*.

He *couldn't*.

"Sapnap, please, just-", he looked at his friend, whose eyes were fierce, but were undoubtedly wet. "Just let me go one more time, I'll be back before sundown and I won't ever leave town again."

"George, no-"

"Please, just *let me say goodbye*."

Sapnap's demeanor started to crack, but the boy firmly rooted himself back to the spot. George shivered at the sight.

"If you take even a step out of town, I won't hesitate a single second before I tell your mother.", the words were harsh. "-and don't expect me to help you once she finds out just what you've been doing.", he paused.

"You would've brought that on yourself, George... I'm warning you."

George only flinched, as he drew in a shattered breath.

Sapnap was his friend. George knew that he was only looking out for him. He was a good person, George knew that... and yet...

“You promised.”

This time, Sapnap’s resolve crumbled, and the tears finally gave way from the pressure.

Two insignificant words, balanced on a breaking string, carrying the weight of the world itself.

“You *promised*, Sapnap!”

Sapnap growled.

“I care about *you* more than our *stupid promise*, George!”

The thread snapped.

George wavered.

The air turned heavy.

“No you *don’t*. If you did, you’d at least let me have one more day with Dream!”

Sapnap gave out a wet laugh.

“Is that what you call him? Dream?”, he said, the laughs turning sour. “What a sweet name...”

A pause.

“It’s true, isn’t it?”

“What’s true?”, George asked, wiping his face, and Sapnap shook his head defeatedly.

“You don’t even realize it.”

They went quiet, neither of them knowing what to say to the other.

What had the day come to?

They were *close*. They knew everything about each other.

George couldn’t have asked for a better friend, but... he just couldn’t make any sense out of Sapnap’s words.

The silence was eventually broken by George, who brushed past the other boy, taking purposeful steps towards the lake.

“George... what are you doing?”

He stilled.

“I’m leaving, Sapnap. Tell my mother for all I care... just know that I won’t *ever* forgive you for it.”, George’s eyes snapped over to his friend, who flinched at the harsh gaze.

“George-”

“Save it.”, he turned around. “I don’t care if I get hurt. I don’t care if I die. If I’m going to be stuck

inside town after this, just let me have this one last day to myself.”

“The sorcerer, George...”, Sapnap’s gaze was pleading. “He’s out there.”

“So is Dream.”

With that, George stepped into the lake, and began his way across the narrow bridge.

An unbridled guilt crawled up his veins.

He turned around, only when he reached the wall.

Sapnap was still standing on the other side, staring at him.

George saw him shift his head towards the ground. He saw him snap his gaze up. He saw him clench his hands into fists. He saw him open his mouth.

George ducked through the wall, just as Sapnap’s words breached the air.

“I’ll tell her George! I promise- *I promise* to you that *I’ll tell her!*”

George pretended he didn’t hear the words.

Sapnap never kept his last promise anyway.

## Chapter End Notes

George pls... he was only looking out for you.  
and Sapnap pls...

you explained that, almost as well as my update schedule--

## I wish I could leave.

### Chapter Summary

please don't kill me.

### Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

George was running through the forest.

The trees whizzed past him, the greenery shifting into nothing but a blur. The sun was shining through the leaves, into his already unfocused eyes.

He ignored the headache that was starting to form, mind left reeling from the last conversation he had with Sapnap.

*'I care about you more than our stupid promise, George!'*

A single sentence. A piercing edge. A seam unraveled.

He sobbed.

*'Why?'*

*'Why was Sapnap doing this?'*, he thought, then felt an immense feeling of guilt crawl up his veins.

No... Sapnap wasn't doing this, it was his nightmares. His stupid, *stupid* nightmares.

George knew about the nightmares, *of course he knew about them*, but why?

Why did Sapnap have to suffer from them?

He wished he had more time. He wished he had noticed sooner, that the nightmares were getting worse. Sapnap never told him. He played things off, and of course he did. *He's Sapnap.*

Frankly, George didn't know what the other boy would do. They knew each other so well, yet for the first time, he couldn't tell what his friend was thinking.

He didn't know if the other would really tell his mother, he didn't know if the other would still be his *friend*.

George whined.

Carelessly, he brought his arm up to his face, wiping his tears frustratedly. He couldn't see the rock that was right in front of him, the same rock that tripped him on his first visit to the forest.

With a looming sense of déjà vu, he felt himself stumble and fall through the matted bushes. There was nothing but air to slow down his tumble, and he felt his back hit the ground with a harsh slam. He rolled on the ground, landing facing away from the all-familiar stone statue.

George curled into himself...

The thoughts barreled straight at him.

*What was he supposed to do if Sapnap told his mother?*

*Would he tell her about Dream?*

*What would she think of him then?*

...

*Would she be disappointed? More than she already is?*

*Would she regret raising him?*

He didn't know.

He laid there on the grass, for a while.

He felt the wind drifting past him. The leaves rustled; the trees shifted.

He felt a voice prodding at him, begging him to hear it.

*'What's wrong?'*

George turned over.

He wiped his eyes.

“Dream...”, he muttered.

He stood up, slowly walking to the statue. He knelt down in front of the prince, hands wrapping around the neck.

“Dream.”

He rested his face onto the cold stone, as his tears danced their way down the unmoving rock.

“My friend, Sapnap... The one I told you about.”, he shuddered. “He said he’s going to tell my mom about me leaving town, about everything I-”

George curled further into the statue, desperately searching for warmth or softness that wasn’t there.

“I don’t know what to do.”

He felt his throat closing up. He felt his eyes burning as he thought of everything that went wrong in a single, short moment.

He wanted to stay there forever, next to Dream, where he felt safe. But he knew the thought was absurd, he had to go back at some point. He had to face his mother. He had to know whether Sapnap told her, and she’d decided she’d had enough.

He always felt unwanted in Raymore, always felt that he wasn’t needed in his own home.

It was a stupid feeling wasn’t it? He wanted to run away and explore the world desperately, but at the same time, he wanted to feel loved by his mother. He just wanted to feel cared for, and the one person who cared about him didn’t anymore.

He wanted to tear his head out from the conflicting emotions.

What was he supposed to do?

“Dream, please, *please*-”, a sob broke out of him. “I don’t want to be here anymore. I don’t- I don’t want to do this, I wish she- I wish she didn’t *hate me*. I-”

He dragged his fingers down the hard stone.

“I just want someone to talk to. I just want someone to care about me. I just want to feel like I’m not some sort of stain that people have to deal with. Sapnap-”, his throat closed up, his eyes felt heavy.

“I just want my best friend back.”

His voice cracked at the end of the sentence, but he didn’t have the will in it to feel embarrassed.



“All my life, I just- I just wanted to feel something. I don’t want to waste away in a village when everything flies past me. I want to live, Dream, I just want to live, but-”, he laughed dryly. “If you wake up, would you take me with you? You’re a prince right, you must have a horse or two. We could even fight evil sorcerers, and this time, I won’t let you be turned into a-”

The sentiment went unsaid, as he realized what he was doing moments later. Every emotion he felt towards Dream, twisted and turned into a bitter feeling.

He was sobbing to a lifeless statue. He was spilling his feeling onto an over-glorified piece of rock, a rock that he’s been talking to for the past month.

George’s mother was right. Sapnap was right.

He was stupid for thinking he could run away from his responsibilities, from his life. His mother reminded him every single day.

He felt her words crashing into his head, like a dam that was keeping them behind suddenly broke. His thoughts drifted to Sapnap.

*Sapnap*, who tolerated him for the time being, solely because he was his friend, but eventually got tired of him too.

“I’m stupid. I’m so *stupid*-”

He leapt to his feet, and angrily wiped at his eyes. He glared back at the statue, putting every emotion he could behind his expression.

The permanent smile of the statue looked like it was taunting him.

Without glancing back again, he ran from the clearing, making a promise to himself that he’d never leave town again, and praying to every deity out there, that Sapnap hadn’t told his mother yet.

---

Sapnap didn’t know why he said it.

He wouldn’t have even thought about telling his mother, had he not already known that George was terrified of her. He knew he would lose his friend if he said it, but he thought it was enough to keep George in town.

Sapnap never considered that his friend would’ve risked losing his home, if it meant that he could

see the Stone Prince one last time.

*How did he manage to feel something so deep for an unmoving statue? Was George really that lonely?*

Sapnap couldn't find the humor in him to laugh at the thought.

Clearly his friend felt stuck, like he was running through every turn in a maze that had no ending... and Sapnap had just casually thrown a minotaur into the mix.

Now the latter was stuck staring at the hopeless dream catcher above his bed, wondering if he'd ever see George again.

He curled his hands into his hair, pulling it at the seams.

*What was he supposed to do?*

Was he supposed to wait on his bed until George decided to return again? Would it take a day? A week? A month?

*Would he return at all?*

A creeping sense of dread crawled up on him.

He had essentially left his friend out to *die*.

George didn't know about Brine. He didn't know how powerful he was, didn't know what he could *do to him*-

Sapnap felt scared. He *always* felt scared.

*He hated feeling scared.*

He felt scared for his Grandma, whose health was slowly declining, he woke up terrified from the nightmares that got worse each day, he especially felt horrified at the thought that he would never see George again.

He had to save him.

Forget Brine, forget the evil sorcerer who could kill him with a single look, *he wanted his best friend back.*

“And I’ll get him back.”, he said to no one in particular, and turned away from the dream-catcher on the wall.

Only to come face to face with a pair of white, glowing eyes.

“Aww, you’ll get him back, will you?”, the voice was cold, gravelly.

Sapnap’s vision turned black.

## Chapter End Notes

I have an explanation your honour.

(PLEASE, don't read on if you're not in a good head space /srs)

To everyone who thinks im dead for not updating for so long, honestly, things have been hard at home for the past few months, my exams are coming up, my parents are on my back about studying, and i basically pulled a dream on them at one point, if you get what i mean.

basically, his song, mask, just resonates alot with me. His school life, i half relate to. Everything was piling up, and i chose to abandon things i had control over.

Im saying this, not as an excuse for procrastinating this work for so long, cause i know i shouldn't have left it. but i just want anyone who reads this to understand so yeah.

Thank you so much, for tolerating me.

And now that im more free to do what i want, i promise i wont leave it for this long. There's only a few more chapters left, and i altered the ending to make it more worthwhile.

Im sorry for everthing. Please forgive me.

## The fire's burning.

### Chapter Summary

Sapnap has a few things to think about.

*“Grandma, why does everyone hate you?”, a seven-year-old Sapnap asked.*

*At his young age, the boy couldn't tell whether his words offended his grandmother or not. After all, he only asked a question he wanted an answer to. He wanted a reason, as to why the people of Raymore shunned his only guardian, when she did nothing wrong.*

*To his knowledge, the old woman only responded with a sweet smile.*

*“They chose not to believe who I am, my dear.”*

*At the vague answer, Sapnap gave her a confused look.*

*“What do you mean? You're my grandma, how could they not know that?”*

*The chuckle that erupted from her was light and airy.*

*“Oh, my sweet boy, I wasn't talking about that-”, she shifted in her seat, an ancient thing it was, made of pretty, woven bamboo.*

*“I was talking about the legend... the tale of the great kingdom.”*

*“You mean the bedtime story you tell me? About the prince?”*

*The woman sighed.*

*“It's so much more than just a bedtime story, child. It's the truth.”, she travelled her eyes towards the open window, letting out a wistful sigh.*

*“All the walls were pristine white, made of the finest quartz of the land. The gates were always arched so beautifully, like the neck of a swan... and the roads, oh how I love the sound of their roads...”, she paused, closing her eyes as a solemn breath escaped her lips. “They were layered with sand and gravel- you could hear every movement of the wooden carriages that travelled over them.”*

*“You're talking like you've lived there, grandma.”*

*She smiled at him.*

*“Oh no, love, I haven't. I've never stepped a foot into the kingdom. By the time I even heard it, the evil sorcerer had already destroyed it.”*

*The boy pouted.*

*“I don't like the sorcerer...”*

*The woman only laughed.*

*“I don't like him either, honey.”*

*A brief silence overtook the room, as Sapnap drifted off into thought. His brows furrowed as*

*another question rose in his head.*

*"But...grandma, how come you know so much about the kingdom, if you've never been there?"*

*His grandmother paused at that, seemingly contemplating her next words.*

*Her face morphed into a frown, as her eyes dulled considerably.*

*"Grandma?"*

*"I'm a seer, my boy.", she gazed at him, seemingly waiting for his reaction. "I have magic."*

*Sapnap scrunched his nose.*

*"Magic?", he paused. "I don't get it... What's a seer?", his tone was petulant, fit for his age.*

*The woman chuckled again, amused at the curious boy.*

*"A seer is someone who sees things they've never seen before. They have visions, and they come like dreams.", she looked to the side. "Usually, they're telling of the future but this time... I can only assume they're from the past."*

*Sapnap was silent for a long time.*

*"So... is that why everyone hates you? Because you're a seer?"*

*His grandmother only let out a defeated sigh.*

*"Yes love, that's why."*

*"But... you can't control it grandma! How could they hate you?"*

*The old woman spared him a pitying glance, eyes saddened at the innocent boy's words.*

*"Hate is a strong word to use, my boy. Try 'wary', or even better- 'fear'."*

*"Fear?"*

*"There are only two things in this world that the people are scared of, son", her eyes glinted in the light. "The fear of what can't be controlled, and the fear of everything unknown."*

*She leaned back into the chair, relaxing her weight gracefully.*

*"I happen to be both."*

*Sapnap became quiet. His next words came out in a whisper.*

*"That's cruel, grandma."*

*"It is, isn't it?", she slowly sat up, groaning as she did.*

*The woman pinned the boy with a sharp gaze, wanting her next words to be heard carefully.*

*"You know now, my boy. Never let your fear cloud your decisions, or it would become your downfall."*

*Sapnap looked at her, with a mix of intimidation, and mild understanding. His grandmother sighed, and brought a hand out, ruffling his hair to break them both out of the tense feeling that befell them. It made the boy burst into giggles, and the woman smiled at him.*

*"As long as you don't, you'll make your granny proud, won't you? My brave little boy!"*

*"I'm not little, grandma!", the affronted boy yelled. "-but I promise I'll make you proud."*

*She smiled, but Sapnap couldn't help but notice the tears that painted her eyes.*

*“I promise!”*

...

*“I promise you, that I will always be by your side-*

...

*“I promise, we’ll always be together, George.”*

*"No matter what."*

---

Sapnap woke with a start.

Quick breaths escaped his lips as he desperately heaved air into his lungs. He tried standing up, only to realize that his hands were tied behind his back. He was still inside the bedroom.

Memories slowly started to seep back into his head.

*He was turning around, set to go back to the forest to help his friend. Instead, glowing white eyes filled his vision, as a gravelly voice drilled into his ears.*

*“Aww, you’ll get him back, will you?”*

*His body grew numb, his vision darkened.*

Sapnap started to hyperventilate.

‘The sorcerer’s here.’, he thought to himself hysterically.

The sorcerer was *here*.

He could’ve killed him. Sapnap’s life would’ve ended then and there, and he’d have no way of knowing. He would be *dead*-

Sapnap closed his eyes.

“Calm down.”, he told himself. “Calm down- He didn’t- He didn’t kill you. You’re alive. So, he didn’t.”

His face scrunched up, as he tried in vain to level his breathing.

He needed to get himself out of these ropes and find George. He needed to get people to help them, he needed to figure out a way to escape from his *own god-forsaken home-*

His thoughts came to a screeching halt.

Glimpses of a dream he had, of his late grandmother, started to play out in his head. Her kind smile, her once soft eyes-

Sapnap remembered her telling him that she was a seer, he remembered believing it.

When he was just a naïve child, he fell for anything, of course he believed that his grandmother had magic.

Then, she started to get the nightmares, just a few years before her declining health took her. She’d grab the boy by his shoulders, shaking him, screaming at him that the sorcerer was coming, that the great kingdom was dead and Raymore would be next. He didn’t pay attention to what she was saying. He could only feel her sharp nails digging into his shoulder, could only see her terrified face, eyes streaming with tears as she never stopped yelling at him.

His trust in her wavered after that.

Sapnap started to believe the words from the townsfolk, who shunned both his grandmother and himself. He believed that she was truly sick in the head, and he would turn out to be just like her.

It didn't help that after her death, he began to get the same dreams, the same nightmares- ones about an evil sorcerer and fallen kingdoms that used to hold the sky.

He only ever spoke about them to George, afraid that he’d suffer the same fate as his grandmother if he said them out loud.

The fog began to clear up.

Sapnap’s Grandmother was a seer; she had *magic*.

*Did he have it too?*

He clenched his hands into the rope.

*Were the nightmares just glimpses of the past? The past of the old kingdom?*

*...or was it the present?*

He closed his eyes, mind reeling from all the pieces that were falling into place. His skin began to burn- he assumed it was the ropes cutting his wrists.

He paid no heed to it.

All his life, he'd been standing on the edge of a cliff, fighting against the winds that were pushing him to the sea. He'd been terrified of everything, terrified of the people that tormented him, terrified of himself.

Sapnap was tired of the feeling.

His hands were tied behind his back.

His hands were tied behind his back by a powerful sorcerer, a sorcerer who couldn't kill him, a sorcerer who thought he was intimidating enough to be a *threat*.

The sorcerer might be scared of *him*, of *Sapnap*.

He felt his heart *burn*.

Sapnap had spent his entire life, being scared of one insignificant person, who haunted his dreams, only to realize that the other could just be scared of *him*.

Now that person was set to hurt his *friend*.

His blood started to boil, *as every vein in his body lit up in flames*.

If only he could figure out a way to get out of these *senseless ropes*-

*Sapnap's vision turned red.*

Time slowed down.

A list of thoughts played out like a melody, one after the other, as he tried to figure out what in Merlin's name was happening.



He first realized that his room was on fire.

Amber flames graced his vision, and they covered almost every line of his sight. He tried not to panic, as he took notice of the lack of binds that once encased his wrists.

He brought his hands out in front of him, which was a supposed mistake, as he then realized a much bigger problem-

-which was the fact that he was *on fire*.

Sapnap started to scream.

“I’M ON FIRE!”, he yelled, which beautifully brought out the fact that he could observe, identify, and say what was right in front of him. “FU-”

A list of unsavory words that would’ve made a sailor blush escaped his lips, as he repeatedly got berated by a voice in his head that suspiciously sounded like Bad’s. He thought back to the past, trying to remember anything- anything he could’ve done to deserve what he was going through.

He screamed louder as the flames flared up.

The fourth and final thing he realized was that... no, he somehow wasn’t writhing in pain and agony from the scorching heat that surrounded him.

The screaming abruptly stopped, as the growing terror paved way for the confusion that followed.

He brought a hand out in front of him.

“Well...”, a solemn pause, as a poor soul tries to figure out what exactly was happening to him.  
“That’s it. I’ve finally lost my mind.”

Tiny flames danced their way around Sapnap’s fingers, probably giggling to themselves about how they were confusing the poor boy.

They left his skin clear, and untouched.

Sure, they felt like little pinpricks, but they strangely weren't *hurting* him.

"Great... either my grandmother had freaky fire powers she never told me about, or I'm doomed to be a walking furnace forever."

The fire went out.

"Hey- Hey wait no, come back!", he waved his arm about in dismay. "Please! That was the coolest thing that ever happened to me. I'm sorry if I offended you, please give it back!", he didn't know who he was talking to.

He flapped his arms about, flicking his fingers, doing anything in his power to get the fire back. The sight looked somewhat absurd.

"I swear to every deity out there, if I'm not on fire in the next three seconds I will-"

The fire burst into life.

Sapnap yelped, as he watched the fire start to burn at his fingertips, covering the room in amber hues.

"Oh... does it only happen when I'm... angry?"

The fire went out.

"I suppose that's a yes."

Sapnap closed his hands into a fist.

His mind reeled from all the new possible ways he could bring the sorcerer down. He could burn him to a crisp, could melt him into a statue. The latter seemed less likely but the boy sure did find the appeal of it.

He tried not to scoff as a final realization set in place.

"So he *was* scared of me... hah, can you imagine, he was *terrified* of me!", his laugh was confident, cocky. "He tied me down, thinking he was stopping me from fighting him, thinking he could just blow out the candle but oh, *no*-"

Sapnap whipped his arms out, as waves of fire crashed around him. They burned even brighter than before, surrounding his entire body like a storm.

"-he just fanned the spark into a *flame*."

The grin he wore looked dangerous.



# The tides are turning.

## Chapter Summary

George goes back home.

This chapter is dedicated to ao3 user PumpUm0101Z , whose sole comment fueled me to cancel all of my classes to finish this chapter.  
it was the best decision I've made in a while heck yeah.

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

The walls were looming over him.

They stood taller than he remembered – dark, menacing, almost as if they knew they intimidated him. The sun was out, but the sky was murky, coating the land in a depressing hue.

The boy flinched at the distant sound of thunder. It promised an evening of rain, putting a damper on his already dull mood.

George shivered.

He didn't want to cross the border. He didn't want to take a single step closer to his bane.  
But Sapnap was behind those walls.

Sapnap, his friend, the one who paved him a way out of town, the one who was the sole reason behind him meeting the Stone Prince.

Sapnap... who he repaid by yelling at him, by acting like a child, by leaving him in favor of talking to a lifeless statue over his own friend.

George wanted to take it all back. He wanted to restart the day. He wanted to realize sooner how ridiculous he was acting. He felt pathetic, remembering how he ran after a hopeless fairy tale, believing a tall story.

At least Sapnap had his excuse.

The boy took a deep breath. He had nothing outside those walls. His life belonged inside. His friends, his chores, his mother...

George shivered at the thought of his mother.

If Sapnap told her the truth...

*Surely she wouldn't send him away?*

Surely he could explain everything to her. Surely he could go back to the life he had.

*At least he'd have Sapnap again...*

That was the final thought that led him to take a step forward.

He crouched down, feeling the coarse dirt on his hands. He squeezed his way through the familiar opening, grappling at the surrounding stones, as a means to regain his balance on the other side.

He turned around, and paused.

Eyes widened, as cold fear gripped his veins.

*This isn't happening. This is not happening.*

George's mother, along with Sapnap, and positively half of the town's population was waiting for him on the other side.

His breathing turned harsh. He felt sick.

His mother was glaring at him, wrinkles drawn out by the deep frown on her face, and Sapnap...

George could've sworn his friend was *sneering* at him. A swarm of feelings welled up inside the boy, despair being the most eminent. He was forced to shift his gaze, turning to the townsfolk that stood behind them. He could recognize a few faces, a few friends, but most of them were friends of his *mothers'*.

Their stares were mostly judgmental.

George gulped.

"Well?", he heard Sapnap's voice pierce the silence, and George snapped his focus towards him. "Cat's out of the bag, *friend*." A scoff. "I told her."

“Sapnap...?”, it was the only sound that tore from his lips, leaving behind a bitter taste of betrayal.

“You don’t want to keep us *waiting* do you?”, his friend drawled, and George could only stare at him. It was uncharacteristic of his friend. *Sapnap wasn’t like this.*

But he was still glaring at him – and George could do nothing but stand there silently. He had half a mind to turn around, to run back into the forest, where everything felt safe. But that wasn’t an option anymore. He made his bed when he crossed the town wall.

George watched, as Sapnap smiled – a smile so cruel he couldn’t recognize the person behind it.

Everything was moving too fast.

With a shuddering breath, George stepped onto the pebble bridge.

The cold water danced at his feet, small waves forming from the soft winds, and he couldn’t help but think,

*Was this the end?*

The weight felt heavy on his shoulders. He thought about Sapnap, Bad, his friends who were all *looking* at him from across the lake. Their stares were penetrating, and the silence suffocated him.

*What are they thinking?*

He wanted to know, especially when it came to *Sapnap*, his *best friend*.

George knew his friend was kind. He was thoughtful, He wasn’t the type to turn his back on people, and yet here he was, glaring at him with pure, unfiltered hatred.

George wanted to cry.

He took another step instead.

The small pebbles felt sharper than he remembered. They poked at his bare feet, making him stumble as he tried to find his balance.

But, how could he, when his whole world was tilting?

He didn’t want to think about what his mother had planned out for him – but his mind couldn’t help but cruelly remind him of his future.

An endless list of chores, the same monochromatic routine, bored tones, unhappy faces...

George thought he’d at least have his best friend back, but even Sapnap couldn’t bare him.

Two steps... A third...

He was halfway across the lake now, the crowd waiting with anticipated breath.

George could almost feel their individual stares on him. They made his skin crawl, made him tremble at the thought of their disdain. But a bitter feeling of acceptance crawled into his mind.

This was what he deserved.

George placed a foot in front of the other, taking the last few steps to reach the shore, but he refused to step onto dry land.

The lake water lapped at his feet, and he felt it's presence comforting. It was as if the small waves were petting him, pulling him into the soft dirt as a means to ground him. He didn't know why he felt that way.

The boy had an affinity to personify lifeless beings after all.

He couldn't find the humor in him to laugh at the thought.

His mother and Sapnap were now only a few steps away, and though his gaze was trained to the muddy ground, he could feel the heat of their stares on his bristling skin.

His mother's next words, although spoken in a whisper, made him tremble.

***“How dare you?”***

George wanted to cry.

The silence was deafening.

“How *dare* you lie to me? How dare you *lie to your friend*? How dare you go behind my back, sneak out of town and talk to a complete *stranger*!”

Her voice got louder and louder, drawing the attention of the crowd onto them, and George just wanted the humiliating feeling to *go away*.

“Do you have *any* idea how *stupid* you've been?”

He kept his gaze on the ground, refusing to look up at the eyes that were on him. He didn't want to look at his mother. He didn't want to look at Sapnap.

*'Why does she think that I lied to him? I never did...'*

His mother's voice cut through his stray thought.

"Tell me who she is – *now!*"

At that, George's mind blanked.

*What did Sapnap tell her? Did he stick to the 'girl' story?*

His mother raged on.

"Your friend told me *everything* George! Everything!", she stepped closer. "You evaded your chores, gave up on your responsibilities, left the house for *hours* at a time. And- and, for a while, I accepted it since you apparently told your friend it was for a girl living in our town. I would've been fine with it if it was!"

She took her glasses off, pinching the bridge of her nose.

"But that's not the case *is it?* Of all people you went and caught feelings for a *rogue!* A wandering stranger, who you're mindlessly following because she put all these little thoughts inside your head that leaving your home, your *life*, your responsibilities is a good idea!"

George felt the color drain from his face.

Sapnap couldn't have told her this- it was far from what actually happened. Why would Sapnap twist the story to make it sound *worse?* He- he *wouldn't*.

"How *useless* are you, George?", his mother's voice wavered, and the feeling of guilt seeped into his veins. "Ever since your father left, all I've wanted was a competent son, but you're nothing but a *disappointment!*"

The word rattled around his brain, refusing to leave the corners of his mind. It was a word he repeatedly heard throughout his childhood, in varying tones and volumes. The sting didn't hurt any less each time he heard it. Like poison being poured into an open wound, George felt it ripping apart every nerve of his body.

He subconsciously turned towards Sapnap as he usually would, in an effort to seek comfort, but his friend only looked at him with that same, cold expression.

George had never felt so alone.

"Tell me her name, *George!*"

He flinched, as the image of Dream drifted through his mind.



The same boring statue, surrounded by dead roses and vines – a statue he risked his life for, a statue he'd never get to see again. The bitter thought of Dream shouldn't have made his fear settle down. The thought of a lifeless statue shouldn't have comforted him more than a childhood friend. But he still felt calm, he still felt safer than he ever did, and that thought scared him.

He remained silent.

“Did you hear me? I asked you her *name*, George!”

He didn't know what to say.

Dream faded away from his mind and he felt the panic rise up again. He felt the stares from the people around them, He felt the tiny droplets of rain on his skin. Everything *burned*.

“Do you think this is a *joke*? Do you think your father would be proud of you? He knew his role, George! He knew his responsibilities! He knew not to abandoned his town! But just *look at you*.”

*Please stop looking at me.*

“You're nothing but a constant pain to deal with! I asked you to do one thing. One thing! But, what do you do? Disobey your own mother to run after some selfish, pointless dream! What do you have to say for yourself!”

George said the first thing that came to mind.

“It's not pointless, mother.”, he didn't have to look up to see the expression on her face. “-and I'm not selfish...”

He knew he was upsetting her further, but he couldn't handle the stares that were undoubtedly judging him. He wanted to defend himself, didn't want the entire town to shun him for this.

He didn't want to lose another friend.

Silence filled the air.

Then, a disbelieving scoff.

“Do you hear that, people?”, she turned to face the crowd. “Little George here thinks that abandoning his own town to meet a *random stranger* isn’t selfish or pointless!”

“That’s not-”

She snapped around to him, and he flinched back, stepping further into the water.

He rapidly blinked his eyes, as the wetness blurred his vision.  
He just wanted everything to *stop already*.

“Mother, *please*. I’m sorry okay?”, his voice broke. “I just want to go home.”

“NOT UNTIL YOU TELL ME HER NAME.”, his mother marched forward, pushing him deeper into the water.

“NOT UNTIL YOU APOLOGIZE. TO ME, TO YOUR FRIEND AND THIS TOWN FOR WHAT YOU DID.”

She was yelling at him. Everyone was watching.

The rain started to drizzle.

George stayed silent in favor of pondering her words.

*Did he deserve this?*

Was meeting Dream that much of a mistake?

*Can he do nothing but be a disappointment to everyone?*

He thought back to when he first left town. It was a day he couldn’t forget, simply because it was brighter than any day he ever had. The heaps of chores piling around him, the constant presence of his mother looming over his back – all of that was forgotten the day he had time to feel happy for himself.

*Was he supposed to apologize for that?*

The fishermen got to leave town, the farmers, shopkeepers, *everyone but him* – but he’s the only one who had to feel sorry for it?

Couldn’t he have one thing for himself? One thing that made him happy?

Dream made him happy.

Though he was just a statue, though he couldn’t say anything back, talking to him made him forget

how dull the world around him was. Talking to him gave him hope that his life could get better one day. Talking to him made him feel like he wasn't stuck inside the same old town. Spending those days with Dream, it meant everything to him.

He didn't care that he was a statue. He was tired of the thought, tired of using that same excuse.

Dream made him happy.

He decided on his answer.

"No, mother.", his voice was meek, the word coming out in a whisper, then, furrowing his brows, digging his heel into the ground. He said, louder,

"*No.*"

His mother's gaze darkened.

"What did you say to me?"

A mummer broke out through the crowd, the people having never seen someone talk back to their leader that way.

George looked up, challenging her stare.

"It wasn't a mistake mother, and I can't regret what I did."

He glanced briefly to Sapnap, who's smile only got meaner. George couldn't tell that it was his friend anymore.

*Why was Sapnap acting like this? What happened?*

"You know what, George?", his mother's voice cut in, dragging his attention away from his friend.

Her voice turned venomous, haunting, as she tore into him.

"You're nothing but a pathetic disgrace of a son. How *dare* you talk to your mother like that? I raised you, fed you, taught you *everything* you know, and you have the *nerve* to say that *you* know better?"

George took another step back, the water was up to his ankles now.

"Mother, I-"

"-And now – now you leave me, worried sick at home, to go after some *girl* living in a bloody *forest!*"

"Mother, *please*, listen-"

"It would've been fine if you stayed in town George, but I gave you *one* rule, one simple rule that your *incompetent* head couldn't wrap around-"

“Mother-”

“You went behind my *back* – All for some random *girl* you met a few days ago!”

Her voice was loud.

“Mother, it wasn’t just a few *days!*”

Everyone was staring.

“Oh then how long was it, George? Was it a week? A month? Do you think it could ever *mean* something?”

It did. *It meant everything.*

“It *does* Mother, just-”

“No, *George!* She was using you! She most likely found out you were the chief’s son, and used your ridiculous dream against you! You don’t understand-”

“No, mother! *YOU* don’t understand!”, the shout rang out through the crowd, and George flinched at his own volume.

His mother only stared at him, both of their breaths coming out in short pants – but their little argument was far from over.

“I don’t understand *what*, George?”, her voice was cold, harsh.

He couldn’t answer.

“You don’t- You-”

“That my pathetic excuse of a son couldn’t figure out he was being played like a fool?”

“No-”

“That he fell for the first girl who accepted his childish dreams?”

“It’s not like that!”

“That he felt rebellious, all because he was doing it behind his mother’s back – all because he thought his useless, pathetic, *feelings would ever mean anything-*”

“Mother, *I love him!*”

George gasped as the words left his lips, a blinding terror curling around his heart.

There was a bright flash of light, followed by a loud clap of thunder roaring throughout the land. The rain started to pour all at once, and the droplets hit heavy on his skin.

“-*him?*”

The word sounded poisonous, and George felt his throat close up.

Everyone was looking at him. Everyone had heard him.

Everyone was watching him. Their stares – some of them looked at him disapprovingly, some of them, Bad, looked at him with pity.

He opened his mouth, hopelessly trying to fix his mistake, but nothing left his lungs. He turned to Sapnap, desperately hoping for even a sliver of comfort, but it was anger that greeted him instead.

The dam broke, and the tears started to fall, but it didn't matter anymore. The rain masked everything.

“Please, I didn't- I didn't mean-”

Sapnap's eyes were wild, furious... but there was a hint of fear inside them that left George reeling.

He didn't have enough time to even his breathing before his friend spoke.

But, his voice... It sounded hoarse, different, unlike himself.

“No. *No*. You idiot! What have you *done*?”

This time, George's mother snapped her head towards him as well. It seems even his mother noticed the stark change in his friend.

“I was so close. *So close* – and you ruined *everything*!”

George didn't know what was happening. He couldn't breathe.

“Sapnap, I-”

“SHUT UP – JUST SHUT UP.”, Sapnap stormed towards him, and George flinched back, terrified by his friend's demeanor.

“*I'm going to kill you.*”

George's eyes widened, as did his mother's.

“Sapnap?”, he tried but his friend only took a menacing step forward.

George stood still, unsure of Sapnap's intentions, but wordlessly trusting that his own friend wouldn't hurt him.

But this wasn't his friend. This wasn't the same person. This wasn't Sapnap. He wanted *Sapnap*.

“You'll regret ever saying that. You'll regret stepping out of these walls – you'll regret *everything*!”

Sapnap spread his arms out wildly, making George flinch and trip back, falling into the cold water of the lake.

To his horror and disbelief, Sapnap's body started to shift.

His hair turned shorter, and his bandana crumbled to pieces. His clothes shifted to form a dark cloak, and his eyes started to get brighter, until only a harsh glow replaced them, almost making the person in front of him look blind.

*The blind sorcerer*, his mind spoke, and all of Sapnap's words hit him at once.

This wasn't Sapnap. This was the sorcerer.

The sorcerer that his friend had warned him about. The sorcerer that was supposedly out to kill him. The sorcerer that tore into the threads of their friendship.

*Sapnap didn't hate him.*

There was a scream, and George turned towards his mother, who was now running back into the fumbling crowd, leaving him alone with the sorcerer. He was cold, drenched in water, and was undoubtedly incapable of defending himself.

Yet, the only thought that came to his mind was,  
*Where's my friend?*

The crowd was panicking now, but none of them left the scene. Either they were worried about him, or they wanted to see what happened next – and George didn't want to figure out which.

The sorcerer loomed over him, and George felt the fear finally settle in. He tried to crawl back from the other, but his attempt was only met with a cruel laugh.

“You made a terrible mistake, *boy*.”, he clenched his hands, forming them into fists. A beam of harsh light encased them.

“-and you'll *pay for it*.”

George closed his eyes, bracing himself just as the sorcerer raised his hands and then-

*The harsh sound of falling rain.*

*The heavy thud of rushing footsteps.*

*The feeling of a shadow, falling above him.*

*The sound of shocked gasps, ringing through the crowd.*

*A strangely familiar voice.*

**“You won’t lay a finger on him, Brine.”**

George looked up.

Chapter End Notes

you can yell at me, i dont mind.

End Notes

Thank you for reading and please let me know if there are any mistakes that need fixing!  
<3

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